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- *Human life is the process of refinement of beliefs*
- *Community of human and spirit life*
- *The importance of stones on the path of life*

It is indeed God who surrounds your lives and provides light. This light illuminates the paths for each of you. Those paths are illuminated whether it is in a time of daylight or the darkest of nights that you may feel.

Your life and the lives of all human beings are in their fullness a process of refinement. What is it that we mean by refinement in life? It is in the final view a sense of discernment, a perspective that allows you to weigh what is truly important, not what is important for your immediate needs but what is important as it impacts all. There are of course moments in your life, and they may be measured in years, when your deepest concerns are of matters of the present. That is not to be rejected but embraced, embraced within a larger view that acknowledges the needs that you personally have are not in substance different from the needs experienced by others. Just as you seldom express your frustrations and deepest concerns to others, they also share that reluctance. There is no way for you to easily comprehend the journeys of others, and as a consequence, it becomes easy to imagine that your difficulties, worries, anxieties, and pains are in some way unique to you. They are not unique, and they are to be accepted as part of your journey and the journey of everyone. It is another layer in this community of which we spoke.

This discernment, this distinction between what is really important and what is important for you, is one of acknowledging that all that you perceive to be of importance is also part of everyone's experience. So when you feel consumed by your own issues, by your own difficulties and challenges, that is the time to realize that you as individuals are a part of an enormous tapestry of human beings, that what you experience is not wholly different from others, but what you experience belongs to what it means to live a human life.

When you consider the common nature of what you share with others, you then find yourself slowly recognizing those needs that are unexpressed by those around you. It is in its own way a path towards affirmation, a path towards love for all. It sensitizes you to the richness of the human experience and in no way can be seen as a kind of isolation. You live in community with others. What you experience, others experience. The joys that you are part of are also the joys that others participate in.

The human experience is a seeking to balance, a seeking to integrate all that you endure as belonging to all that human beings endure. But in that acknowledgment of common community, there is a need to pull back, however briefly it might be, to observe why it is that you respond as you respond to life as you experience it. For some, the reasons for their response are because of that feeling of being separated, a feeling of

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alienation. But you must always understand that you are never separated. You are never an alien to that divine light.

Some challenges that you face are of truly little significance. Part of your journey as human beings on a search for God is to recognize those issues which are indeed temporary in nature and which are of great significance. How is that winnowing accomplished? How do you know if what you experience is really essential and must be welcomed?

The answer, of course, is complicated and structured with many layers, but your involvement in listening to your guides and responding as you are guided belongs to a central position in this winnowing. We can say very simply that whatever is best for all is best for you. But having said that, the question still arises, what is best for all, for your perception of that question is based in large part on your experience. If you don't feel that sense of community, it is difficult to identify what is best for all. If you are indeed on a search for that divine light that you identify as God, then you can only base your approach on what is important upon your perception of what God is, who God is, how God's presence is enacted, and how it is experienced by others.

This discernment is ultimately a search for an answer to the question: how can I be an instrument of God? Knowing that as your perception and understanding of God changes, so will the answer to this question change. There are many for whom a perception of God must be seen as firm, inflexible, and characterized as absolute truth. By this time in your search, we know that your perception of who God is or what God is continues to evolve, and for those who understand that their perception of God grows and matures and deepens, it is not a great leap to take to admit that one's response at one point in life can be very different than how one responds at another stage along the pathway. This refinement and discernment grows and evolves, but that growth and evolution occurs only when you welcome the opportunity to truly search rather than going through your life with the absolute conviction that your present perception of God is absolute in its rightness.

We, your guides, are in a sense charged with helping every step along the way in your journey toward understanding. There is no one who has total insight into who God is or what God is and how God is manifested in your daily lives. Many have opinions, and those opinions may be filled with great wisdom, but that wisdom is never complete. Indeed, we can say that our understanding of what God is and who God is continues to grow and broaden. We continue to be illuminated by that presence. We see and feel that presence, but we are in a constant state of learning to understand that presence.

What we share with you comes from what we know to be true while simultaneously realizing there is more to that truth. You grow in your spiritual understanding and discernment in the refinement of spirit through our efforts. We, too, share in that same process. We learn, grow, and evolve, but through this learning, growth, and evolution runs a single thread that connects us with one another and with you and that Spirit Center.

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That thread is a nonjudgmental, all-encompassing Love. That Love understands. That Love embraces. It supports, reaches out, and sees only with the heart. There is no sense of self. There is only an awareness of community, and in that community the dominant energy form is that Love.

It is our effort to share part of what that Love is. You are guided through that Love. You are communicated with that Love. The guidance that each of you receives is a guidance that is not just words but an unspoken connection to that Spirit Center, that thread of Love that unites all. All human beings are the recipients of guidance whether or not they are aware of it. The guidance is there just as all that exists benefits from the light that is God. Regardless of one's awareness, that light is always present.

We are always present. Your guides are not limited to unnamed presences that have no direct connection to you. Your guides consist of the spirits of countless others working together in love. This community of spirit involves also those whom you know and those you have loved and with whom you have shared some aspect of human life. You are seen by them not as a physical form but as a uniquely identified spirit.

The question was asked, when there are prayers for family members who have joined us, do they know they are being supported in prayer by you. The answer is an absolute yes, but you have never been fully separated from those entities. They are with you. They know of your joy and your pain. They know when you pray for them, and they are strengthened in that prayer. They are supported on their journey toward vision of the Love, the strand that connects all into a single unity. It is always appropriate to pray for the spirits of those whom you love just as it is important to pray for the spirits of those you know of but have never met. Even your prayers for all guides to be open to the light of God is of benefit to all.

This community that we have spoken of is a community of human beings and a community of spirit beings. It is a community of nature. It is a community of all that exists, all forms of energy, those of which you know something and those that are totally unknown by human beings. Your prayers are a way of connecting to community. They are also an important component of this discernment, this refinement, this winnowing of what is important from what is not important.

What happens in your life from moment to moment is not in itself essential, and yet it is not without meaning. Consider a dirt path that you travel that is impacted by sunlight and rain, ice, hot weather, that is impacted by the creatures that cross it, your footsteps, and the air that you breathe. The path is essential, but on that path are small stones. The stones provide substance for the path. They provide an important part of what makes the path a path. Those tiny stones, those pebbles, those grains of dirt, the bits of leaves, they belong to the path, but in themselves they are not there to make you stumble. They are there to lift you up. They are there to bear your weight. And they are there to mark the direction that you can take. Those stones, therefore, are of ultimately great importance but on a momentary basis are very temporary to your experience. In

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two steps, they are far behind you, and yet they provided a sense of direction, and they supported you when they were needed.

So it is with many events in your life. They are in themselves small pebbles you encounter, and you move forward. But in that encounter, you are supported and given direction. Your path becomes clearer. They are not to be swept away, because when they are eliminated, there is no path. Your discernment, your distinctions between what is important and what is of lesser importance, is one of recognizing that certain things in your life belong to your life and yet they do not destroy it. Through your encounter, your life takes on greater direction, meaning, and impact, and then you begin to see that the path you have followed all along has led to the light. Therefore, we urge you not to cast away those small pebbles, but also not to be disrupted by them. Recognize that they are part of and belong to the journey, and they are in their way contributions to your pathway to light.

Life is a discernment process. It is the distinction that is made between the small pebbles on the path and the large boulders that you must go around in order to remain on the path. Such a refinement takes a lifetime of effort, and it is in your efforts to negotiate your path that we find we are the most helpful, for we assist in this refinement, in this separating what is crucially important from what belongs on your pathway, the smaller particles of life that are indeed the path of light.

You are directed and guided. You are loved and warmed. You are illuminated. You are in community with all that is. You are in community with God, your guides, and all whom you have loved whether they remain in human form or in spirit. Be comforted by this process of discernment. Be comforted in the knowledge that the small stones are an important component of the path but are themselves not barriers to your journey. Rather they support and help point the way.

You are loved. Take that love and share it. Embrace all that exists with a loving heart.

Amen.