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- *Responding to need of others and self*

God unites all of you together into one body. You are indeed one, as your guides have so often instructed. What is one person's concern must be the concern of all. What gives one joy must be shared by all. We find this unified body, your gathering, down emotionally, not necessarily for everyone, but as a general mood. There are, of course, times when you are elated and optimistic, just as there are those times when you experience frustration and discouragement.

Much of what you shared tonight reflects your concern for others who are close to you. These concerns involve you in that they require from you a particular and appropriate response. How do you respond when approached by another who is in need? How do you respond to your own needs? Your greatest help is absolute and clear honesty. Your response to others and yourself can only be based upon your perceptions, and it is toward these perceptions that you must be so honest.

When another asks for help, do you shy away with self-consciousness, selfishness or self-doubt? Do you jump right in for a sense of personal achievement or recognition, or a sense of guilt? What moves you to respond? What moves you to shun the response of others? What moves you to accept the response of others? There are no easy answers to these questions, and for each of you the answers will be different. but you must answer. It does no worldly good for another to offer a hand of help when that offer is made grudgingly, for you will not grow, and the other will sense your reluctance.

If you are reluctant to offer help, should you help? Should you go against your own desires? If your reluctance is motivated by self-concern, then that reluctance is not well-founded. If that reluctance is motivated by the sheer inability to respond because of physical limitations, for example, then you should proceed according to your recognition of your ability. That may mean a different kind of response, maybe one of prayer and not of personal energy.

However you deal with others, giving or receiving, it is critical that you must be honest with yourself. When someone comes to the door, for example, and asks for a contribution, you may be hesitant but think of the reason. Perhaps it is because you do not know enough about the organization. Perhaps it is because you have some bias against the one presenting the request. Perhaps you are reluctant because you feel the request is unreasonable or the purpose unsound. It is so important for you to know yourself more thoroughly. This does not mean constant meditation but reflection and intelligent thought. As you become more aware of who you really are, you will be freed in a manner which allows your response to be governed through a sense of peace and love.

Responding in love does not mean responding positively to what is requested. When a child asks a favor, you may find that it is in the child's best interest that the request be denied. It sometimes takes more honesty to recognize that it is in the child's best interest

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that the request be granted. When a neighbor asks for help, you may recognize, despite your feelings, that it is best that the help be offered. What we are saying here is that your response to life around you must be governed by self-knowledge, a recognition of reality and not some kind of charade.

These requests, when they come, are usually not so obvious as our example of someone coming to the door. More often it is that such requests are never expressed. When you are around someone in need, that person does not say, "I am in need." But if you will listen and watch and care, you will know that person is in need.

Sometimes you are so busy with your life that you don't recognize when you yourself are in need. You find yourself rapidly becoming involved in activities which cloud your perception of what is important, what is meaningful, what provides growth in your life. You are aware of people who have suffered emotional or mental breakdowns, as you refer to them. Each of them was desperately in need and didn't recognize it. So many needs are not spoken or expressed; nevertheless they are communicated. If you are in need and are around others, you communicate those needs, but your communication is much as a radio station: the signal goes out whether or not there is anyone to receive.

It is much like our needs. We need communication with you. Our charge and our desire are to guide each life, but you can be receptive or not. You can be blinded to our needs. In our stage of spiritual advancement, we are not blind to your needs. The guide which God gives you knows you thoroughly. The communication which exists between the two of you is unbreakable in its steadfastness. But from our perception, we share a far greater insight into your life than you can possibly share with others.

The objective is to become fully aware of another, to become fully cognizant of all others. Obviously that is impossible during the earthly phase of your life, but that is the objective. When you are with others, even in an informal surrounding as lighthearted as a party or celebration, try to tune yourself into what you perceive to be the needs of another, and attempt a response which is in keeping with your own self-awareness, your own honesty, which is in keeping with the clarity of your own vision. That is what honesty really is: it is visual clarity. If you are totally honest with yourself, you have no false perceptions, and you are more able to respond with a kind of purity. That response may be giving; it may be receiving.

How many times have you known others too proud, as you say, to accept help? There are so many. Pride inhibits a clear view. Pride sets up a wall between two people. Be not proud in any dealings. Never be motivated out of pride or stymied by pride. It is the most frequent element which hinders a clear and honest response, but there are many others: insecurity, anger, jealousy, resentment, feelings of inferiority, feelings of superiority, impatience. The list could go on, but at the head of this list is pride.

If you want to know how best to respond, eliminate pride first. You will have gone far in your openness to help and be helped. Having tackled pride, you can move on. You certainly know of those whom you have offered to help who have responded negatively. If

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you think upon the incident, you will probably recognize pride. How often have you said, "That person was too proud to receive help." You say also, "How painful to see someone so proud being reduced to asking for help." It is true, the reaction is there, yet by responding this way ("so-and-so was too proud and now it is so tragic"), you are placing pride on a pedestal as if it were an important criterion in measuring an individual's worth. You then are as guilty as the individual in the valuation of pride.

It is a difficult issue, and for many it may seem interminable. So, get to know yourself better. Be willing to look at yourselves squarely in a mirror and say, "This is what I am; this is important and that is not." Begin molding yourself into the kind of person you perceive God has chosen you to be. When you view yourself and see little evidence of God, continue working. Continue until you recognize within yourself God's light being uncovered, being set free. When the light within is free, your vision will be clear and your response true.

We bless you with the intensity of that light from within, and we dedicate ourselves to the uncovering, the brightening, and to your responding as an agent of God.

Amen.