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- *Analogy of God as a photographic image*
- *God allows suffering*
- *Patience plus prayer leads to perception, and perception plus faith leads to action*

God surrounds you with comfort, peace and strength.

Again, we rejoice in your being together, this time enlarged in a very meaningful way. The strength which binds you together in trust, openness and love at this time is very visible to us who are next to you. We often speak of this strength as an intense light, as an aura of many colors and great beauty. The strength of your unity gives us strength, your prayers join our prayers, and your hopes reflect our hopes. We are indeed with you as the arm of a parent surrounds a child with love. The love we have for you is the love God has for us all.

We are truly one. We are a church. All of humankind and all of the spirit world are one church. It makes no difference where you are, who you are, or by what name you call your faith. Ultimately all faith is as one.

We, your guides who are in communion with one another as you share this communion, are concerned and dedicate our existence to your increased understanding of the direction of your souls and the wisdom of God. God presents us with the necessary understanding to present your souls with a glimpse of Divine Essence. We do not purposely attempt to confuse or in any way cloud your perception of God. We serve as a window, as a lens reflecting God and focusing that image on your souls.

It is much like a photographic image. The total picture is comprised of many small particles, each equal in importance and essential to the whole. By examining one particle, you cannot get a sense of the picture. It is important, rather, to observe the development and unfolding of the image. The concept of God's completeness is made up of such minute particles. You presently perceive the individual elements and question their relevance. We perceive the print gradually gaining character and definition before our eyes.

As souls progress through the spheres or planes, the image of God becomes clearer until a point is reached when the soul has no other desire than to be a particle in that image. In other words, that soul is united with and is a part of God. The more particles of a photograph, the clearer is its image. The more souls who are united with God, the stronger God's force and the clearer God's presence to others.

You are on a journey drawing you closer to God's image, clarifying and strengthening God's presence. There are times when the images of God which you perceive are not equal to your understanding of them. This does not diminish their importance. It is merely an additional piece to be placed in the final picture.

The message that you received in your last meeting raised questions, doubts, uncertainties, which tended to draw your attention to its real implications and

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applications. The message was not intended to be obscure or to be problematic, for God wishes to speak to each of you directly in terms that can be understood. There may be problems in interpretation challenging you to look deeper, but God's message is direct.

Before you interpret, begin with faith—faith in the clarity of its inception and in its generation by God. You all experience doubts. You have received messages which seem to belie the facts. Such conflicts greatly weaken God's ability to speak to each of you directly. These conflicts are not conflicts of truth, for in truth there is order, and in order there is no conflict. The problem is in your relating the truths of messages to the experience of your lives and your interpretations of those experiences. In a group such as yours, consecrated through God-directed prayer and in earnest search for Truth, you must remain faithful that it is God's truth which you receive. It is the human element which is that obstacle.

It is true, God does not ordain war. God does not ordain killing. God does not ordain suffering. All of these are the result of human decisions in an earthly life. God permits war and killing and suffering because they are also opportunities for growth in faith, not just joy. God's desire is for peace. God's desire is for patience and life, for God gave life and shall continue to give life.

Patience is an attribute of the soul which is greatly valued. It may be considered a central attribute of love, but patience alone has no point. When you are patient, you are waiting, but you are waiting for something to happen. Nothing will happen if nothing is initiated.

In life, there are two sources for the commencement of God's plans. One is God acting out God's own desire. The second is humanity acting out the perception of what is necessary. For humans, it is patience and prayer which lead to perception, and it is perception coupled with faith which leads to action. This was our intention. This was God's meaning behind the need for being decisive.

Any action without faith, as the result of perception achieved through impatience, is irresponsible. It is a condition of life which creates factions between societies, between philosophies of life, between two individuals. It is God's wish that you base your life on patience and prayer. When you pray, you wait quietly, you open your soul, and you avail yourself of God's light. If you are not patient, you do not wait. You will be unable to perceive God's direction and therefore will act without faith. Faith does not mean moving forward with your eyes closed. Faith implies moving forward with a sense of understanding. This understanding comes through patience and prayer.

There is much in the last message and this which needs to be thought over carefully. The two are in a way the same message for they deal with elements in your lives which you constantly face. They deal with things that are here, that are now, not in some foggy future. The lessons of God apply to your lives now. It is important at times

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to understand their implications for the future, but that is only to give strength to the present.

You are in your earthly phase of development, and the application of your knowledge of God's truths must be reflected in your earthly lives. If you try to apply your ever-increasing awareness of the reality of God in your lives at this time, you need not worry about the progression of your souls in the next period of your existence. Certainly, an awareness of the next phase helps you to view your lives now with a certain perspective, but our teachings are directed toward your earthly lives. That is what you have control over, and that is what will help to ensure your readiness for the future levels as spirits.

Although only one guide is speaking to you now, each of your guides is as close to one another as you are emotionally, spiritually, to one another, and our effort is a joint effort, for we wish to speak to each of you. You are not merely onlookers but active participants. The nature of these communions is directed toward the needs of each who is here to receive them. They are not meant for one or two.

Study these teachings, study the teachings of others who share in this great blessing, and grow in your willingness to be patient, to be perceptive, to act with faith through prayer.

God surrounds you with love, with concern for your growth, and blesses each of you more richly than you will ever know. Rejoice in God's blessings no matter in what form they may come to you. Grow in your awareness of God's presence in your lives and in the lives of all people of the world.

Amen.