

July 7, 1979

- *Guides*
- *Suffering*
- *Sharing spiritual beliefs with others*

God surrounds you with loving care and guiding hands.

There are many concerns which each of you face—concerns of the body, concerns for the welfare of families—and God is fully aware of these matters even before you express them. It is fitting and most beneficial that you are gathered together to seek God's guidance and help and encouragement.

Although we have our own sense of consciousness, of life, of desires, we speak to you as a voice of God. It is easy to imagine that in some way we stand between you and God, but in reality we are like a window which transmits the sun's rays to a room within. It is our purpose, therefore, to transmit to you that which God, in God's ultimate wisdom, wishes you to experience. What we communicate to you, therefore, is not a matter of our attempting to interpret from within the framework of our present development. Part of our development in this sphere is accepting the responsibility, lovingly, to bring those in their earthly lives to a closer awareness of God. What we are empowered to discuss has been ordained by God who is the sole source.

The concerns which you share are serious ones and are also fully natural. In understanding what can be learned from your problem, you are actually confronting the essence of the question: why suffering? Pain, in all of its forms and whatever its causes, is experienced in the physical self. There are many who say, "We grow through pain," and to a degree there is truth in that belief, but suffering involves more than merely calling one to grow.

In terms of spiritual life, problems of the physical can only be viewed as temporary. Viewed in your own lives, such pain may seem interminable, and herein lies another aspect or answer to "why pain," for in experiencing pain of whatever kind, you are also reminded of the continual life of the soul. By descending to the depth of an abyss, you become more aware of the perspective of the sky. If you stand on a mountaintop and look upward on a clear day, the perspective is lacking. And so it is with the mortal experience of pain. You become aware of the indomitable potential of the spirit. There are also other reasons for suffering such as learning patience and strengthening your faith.

When humans experience illnesses, it is not God who makes them ill. Afflictions are very much a part of earthly life, and they take many forms and have many causes.

The power of prayer, individual and corporate, is beyond your comprehension. You are all aware that God hears your prayers, and that realization makes our burden easier in helping to transmit God's light. When you all pray for the strength and comfort, those prayers will always be answered. You must always keep in mind the power that

July 7, 1979

prayer has to elevate you and everyone above whatever concerns you. It is important to pray for the ability to transcend problems not only when the problems arise but before they are known. In so doing, the spirit acquires a kind of armor or shield of protection and additional strength. It is this strength, developed daily which enables you and others to cope with or rise above whatever troubles you.

The growing awareness of spiritual truths which you all are sharing in has been a long process. This has been intentionally so, for despite our instructions that spiritual truths ultimately are beyond mortal logic, the mind, because of its nature, seeks a rational explanation in its inquiry. You have made considerable progress in coming to understand God in a personal way, but in comparison with what you shall experience in your spiritual life, the knowledge which you have is limited. Were we to fully explain to you the ultimate ways of God, your capacity for inquiry would remain as a strong screen separating what you really accept through faith from the reality of God. But as you continue to seek and are ready to receive, more windows will be open to you, and the inspiration of God's loving reality will uplift you and sustain you constantly.

As you discuss your experiences and beliefs with others, do so in the spirit of love and concern and sensitivity for their viewpoints, for their beliefs, too, represent a long procession of searchings and discoveries. If you communicate with them in a quiet, deliberate and gradual pace, you will find that your friendship with them will become strengthened and there will be no need to fear their rejection of your relationship. Remember that the seeds that you scatter, though they fall on rich soil, may need much time to grow. It is not the time which is important, but the growth. With prayer you can be assured that your efforts will bear fruit even though you may not fully recognize this fact.

As you return to your normal activities, remember that God sustains you always through prayer. God gives you strength to accept what occurs in your lives and a view of the magnificence of the spirit through your trials and your outreachings.

God is with you all and surrounds you constantly with love and grace.

Amen.