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[Note: Late on October 1 (early on October 2 EDT) in Las Vegas, a gunman killed 58 people and wounded hundreds more in the worst mass murder in modern American history.]

- *Faith comes out of belief*
- *Thoughts on the mass murder in Las Vegas*
- *Praying for one who does harm*
- *Difference between who and what one is*

God, who is the Creator of all that is, is with each of you. God is with all of creation. God is with those who experience joy and those who endure tragedy. For all that is experienced in human life, God is forever present.

It is at times like this that each of you experiences the depth of despair, the depth of longing, but you can also at this time experience the depth of hope, the depth of belief. You often refer to the need for faith, but faith is not merely a kind of hope. It is more, bathed in a sense of belief. You have faith in the power of God because you have belief in the power of God.

Faith comes out of belief, but of course faith does not come out of certainty—certainty of outcomes, certainty of results, certainty of evidence—for then it is no longer faith. It is no longer belief. Then it is merely observation. You observe what you see or by what you feel. You observe what is happening according to the capabilities of your senses, but that is not faith. Faith requires you to believe in something you do not see with certainty, and yet you have a firm belief that somehow, at some level, something is present. Something will happen. Resolution will be found. These are beliefs, and beliefs are the articles of faith.

Too many wish to pin their lives on a statement of faith, but with further exploration, that faith is simply a hope. Those who are suffering from loss—personal loss, physical loss—often say they have faith that all will be fine ultimately, and yet most of that faith is shrouded in hope rather than to a commitment toward a belief that resolution can be found.

You are asked to believe that peace, balance, loving relationships, understandings, and accommodations will be forthcoming. You believe it, although you do not attach a timeframe to those beliefs. You simply believe that somehow at some point of time, something that you seek will come to you, will occur. That is faith. It is not a blind faith, for such may be naive, but rather faith based on a belief in pure unadulterated, unfiltered belief. A confidence, not an observation, not observing what is, but a confidence of what will be.

Events of this day are tragic beyond your comprehension, for the waves of that violence extend far beyond the epicenter. The impact of this slaughter will never fully

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dissipate. For some, the physical challenges are great. For others, the emotional challenges are enormous, as you have observed, but there are many other layers of impact, impact on society of what can be done, what can be done to mitigate some of what makes such behavior a possibility.

How is your country perceived politically, culturally? Within the powers of leadership and within the hearts of its citizenry, what follows can often be a judgment that is filled with inaccuracy and overstatement. Society is not characterized by the actions of a few. Society is characterized by its response to the actions of a few, for it is society that responds. It is not society that literally pulls the trigger. It is each of you engaged in a search for what is meaningful in life. It is each of you who are committed to the sacredness of all that is. The responsibility for the ways in which you react to the behavior of a few is shared by the response of the many. For some, the response may be evident to lots. For others, the response is known only to themselves. It is not so important what the specific response is but rather that you respond.

Response through prayer is equally effective as the response in any other means, because it is through prayer that you are open and more receptive to that Light that is emitted through God's presence. You respond as you can respond, but in your own response to injustice, you must remember never to be judgmental of the response of others. You may agree or disagree. You may feel such response is appropriate or inappropriate, but you must never forget the fact that it is a response to an injustice. It is better to feel you can respond in some way than it is to throw up your hands and say, "Ah, there is nothing I can do." By asserting there is nothing you can do, you're removing yourself from the potential of making a difference where that difference is crucial.

You know that we pray for the evolution of your soul just as we pray for the evolution of all souls. When you are open through prayer, you are open to our intervention, our presence, our inspiration, our comfort. We are here, not because it is our duty, but because we want to enhance the environment within which you flourish in spirit. That growth of spirit is a need all human beings contain. Some recognize the need for such growth; others deny any need. Some feel those needs can be met in extraordinary ways; others feel minimum devotion to those needs as needed.

Your human lives are plagued always by a changing sense of balance. Your lives are surrounded by pendulums that swing first in one direction and then another. All pendulums ultimately achieve an equilibrium. All pendulums ultimately experience the pleasure of being at rest, not being in tension, not being pulled from one side to another, but finding a state that is free from such strife, such competition.

You have met individuals who feel in good conscience that they can exist alone, independent of any acknowledgment of a Spirit Center. Their denials are based on a lack of vision. It is not that they are inherently evil. It is not that they are inherently wrong. It is simply that they have not had the opportunity to see, to listen with the heart.

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Of course no one can acknowledge through an awareness of God a likeness to the actions that were taken...no one. You do not condemn a person when they are ill and face serious consequences. This individual directly responsible for such a tragedy was also suffering deeply and within himself. You must find ways in your heart's vision to see a troubled person responding in such a troubling manner. You cannot judge the individual because of an illness. You may feel an action that someone has taken to be totally unjustified. The individual, the human being, is no less valuable as a spirit than any of you.

Hard as it may be, although you pray for the healing that must take place physically and emotionally, you must also pray for an individual who offers such tragedy. You pray for the spirits of those who have joined us, but in the same light, you must pray for the individual and the soul of that person that somehow there will be peace. You cannot enter into dialogue with that person, but you can nevertheless approach the sacredness of the individual while still being critical of the devastation that was caused.

You share a human connection with all people who do harm to others. You share a connection to those who promote violence, even when you advocate for peace. If you benefit significantly from the gifts of society, you cannot ignore those who are deprived of those benefits. Such deprivation may be chosen, self-inflicted, but such may also be the result of illness beyond the control of an individual. No one is fully capable of making a distinction that is clear between the two approaches. It is for that reason you cannot become the judge and the jury. You cannot issue an ultimatum that says another individual is a work of the devil, for that individual was created by the same sacred Presence as you were. You made very different life choices, but you are no more worthy of God's Presence than another who has wreaked havoc on countless others.

In a way, this is a test of your capacity to distinguish between the acts and the actor. It is the actor who is always sacred. It is the play to which you can find fault. It is who you are that is sacred. It is not what you do. It is not what you say. It is not what you wear. It is not what culture you belong to. It is not what political beliefs you may hold. It is a wide gap that separates who you are from what you are.

Your guides are not concerned specifically with the "what." It is our intention to nurture the "who," because it is the "who" that is permanent. The "what" is merely temporal. The "who" is always the same "who." It may evolve. It may grow and deepen and become more spiritually aware, but it is still the same "who." On the other hand, the "what" is always subject to changing influences, so much so that the "what" may be unrecognizable from the "what" of the past.

No baby is born to hate. The "who" remains. What that baby does in the course of a lifetime is the "what." Some are blessed with great insight into the "who" that unites all of us. Others develop no vision whatsoever of what it means to identify "who," and all that is observed is simply the "what," the surface, the appearance, the actions. You

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have made decisions in your life that you regret and that you rejoice over, but regardless of what decisions you made, who you are remains permanently sacred. The “who” is the creation of God. The “what” is the creation of humans.

Bring your attention to the “who” that unites everyone and that keeps all equal and sacred and valuable. You are too easily aware of the differences, but it is at times like this that your greatest challenge is to recognize the similarities that unite all of you into a single whole. For those who bring great harm to others, identify how you and those others are the same. There is no effort to recognizing the differences, but it is the common grounds upon which you stand, it is the common life force that you share that must become the ultimate basis for establishing the full content of what it means to be loving and ultimately what it means to be Love.

Become what it is you seek. If you seek peace, become peace. If you seek understanding, become understanding. If you seek love, become love. If you seek compassion, become compassion.

We love each of you for “who” you are. God created “who” you are. Affirm the reality of who each person is at the deepest level possible. Condemn what flies in the face as mockery to a loving God, but stand firm in your acknowledgment that it is because of the loving God that all of you are equal, all of you are valid human beings, and all of you are souls that search for growth toward becoming all Love.

You are loved unconditionally, not for “what” you are but for “who” you are. Reflect that unconditional love to all regardless of the “what.” You are blessed as we are blessed in God’s light that is a part of the entirety of creation.

Amen.