

April 13, 1986

- *The validity of differing beliefs*
- *How to achieve peace*

God speaks to each of you in ways that are clearly understandable, in ways that meet your individual needs. As you read these messages over the years, you find that there are many differences of interpretation. One may perceive your guides' instruction as meaning this, and another perceives that meaning as something else. We should emphasize the importance of this difference of interpretation, for although you are all united by the element of divinity in each of you, your souls have different needs. And because of the difference in needs for what provides nourishment for the soul, your interpretation of what is offered through us will be different. You have seen this happen countless times. You have witnessed the difference in opinion or difference of interpretation.

Just as one or two individuals may approach God's word differently, so can one group of people approach what God offers much differently from another group. One means of worship thereby becomes different from another means. But just as the interpretation of each of you is in itself valid, so also is the difference in interpretation of one church versus another. Some religious groups feed on a sense of guilt, using that guilt as a means of spurring on its members toward a more meaningful existence. For those who accept that approach to life, it is appropriate. But as you have expressed, you feel that dwelling upon guilt is not a productive means of encouraging a more God-like life. For you then, such approach to God is not correct.

What we are saying is that it can be correct when different groups have totally opposite views of what is necessary in order to live by God. There are those religious sects who espouse violence as a means of addressing God's presence in their lives. There are sects that espouse peace only, as a means of experiencing God and reflecting God. Both are correct. We are not saying that God wants people to be violent, but violence is never committed for the sake of violence when God is at the front. Violence is committed because of the commitment that all else fails in the search for bringing about one's perception of God into daily living.

There are always conflicts related to the perception of God. There are those, as you observed tonight, who may be more oriented toward the biblical expression of the beginning of humankind, and others who are oriented toward a more evolutionary perception of the beginning of humanity. We could, of course, clarify which is indeed correct, but that serves no purpose, for you are not researching a paper. It is not your goal in life to convince all others that such-and-such is the case and all else is false. If it is important for some to believe a more evolutionary approach to the beginning of humans, then that is the approach that is best. For those for whom the biblical expression of the beginning of humankind is important, then such belief is indeed

April 13, 1986

correct. What is important is not the fact of which occurred, but rather because of one's belief, one gradually shapes a concept of how life is to be lived. That's what's really important. You need only believe that God had a hand in the creation of human beings. It is not important to know the specifics, for such knowledge would have no ultimate bearing on how one leads a life. Such information is superfluous, eventually meaningless.

If one perceives God as a vengeful power, and as a result lives a life in such a way so as never to merit vengeance, then the growth which has taken place in that life will be appropriate to the needs of that soul. On the other hand, if one believes God never to be vengeful, and such belief helps shape life toward a more meaningful character, then such belief is correct.

At this stage you may wonder whether what has been shared with you over the years is indeed the truth, or merely what you should believe at your stage of development, according to the needs of your soul. You must know that what has been given you is the truth, and not just what may seem appropriate. It is true, however, that what is offered to each of you is given as a kind of measured dose which can be adequately perceived by you. There is no sense in talking over your heads, so to speak. There is no point in confusing you by the presentation of material which you cannot comprehend. What would be the purpose? How could you gain? Certainly there are times when what is transmitted requires more thought, more reflection, before its full implication can be measured. But at no time are you instructed according to truths which are, in fact, untruths. That is the uniqueness of this experience which you share in common.

Despite your contact with what is offered, you cannot go out and convince others of the absolute validity of what you have learned, for others can only accept what they are ready to accept. You cannot feed an infant filet mignon; the child will not accept it. It makes no difference whether the food was cooked well or not; the child is in no position to receive it. A young student can never be expected to grasp the most sophisticated theory of astronomy. It makes no difference whether that theory is true or not; it cannot be assimilated. And so it is as you try to deal with your perception of life and God within that life. There are details which you need yet to assimilate. There are details that you have taken in, but would not be successful in transmitting to others. It's important for you to accept this reality.

You do have much to offer. All of you can contribute to the lives of many others. You can enrich their lives—you can help to provide meaning, comfort, love. All of this you can do, but you cannot expect of others, necessarily, to share your own personal view of God. How frequently we have urged you not to be judgmental, but rather accepting of where all others are in their spiritual course of development. Such urgings are for this reason: what is right for you is right for you; what is believed by another is right for that other person at that current stage in his or her development. You believe

April 13, 1986

what you believe, because you cannot believe something else. You are in your stage of development because that is the stage which is necessary at this time. That is not to say that what you learn is not valid, or that it is valid and all others are invalid. It is only meant for you to believe that where you are in your growth is where you should be. That position changes constantly because growth changes constantly.

Tolerance—true tolerance—for the opinions of others, the actions of others, is indeed difficult to acquire. From your own perspectives it is impossible to fully comprehend fanatics of another religious persuasion who are bent upon destroying what threatens their belief. But you see, you wish to halt the spread of whatever threatens your own belief structure because you feel that what is best for you is generally best for all. Cultures are different; heritages are different. What one must learn to do, whether as part of one culture or another, is to be willing to let other beliefs subsist side by side without the threat or fear of loss which can result. The Jew must not be suspicious of the Christian nor the Arab. All pursuits are legitimate. If the Arab feels the Jew is not a threat, then the Arab is no longer a threat to the Jew. Peace is achieved.

The turmoil which you fear is the result of feeling threatened. It is not caused by what one believes; it is caused by the threat of losing what one believes. If you wish to promote peace, you must never be a threat. If you wish to promote peace, you must let all live. You cannot let all live unless you perceive all else as non-threatening. If all else is non-threatening, why should fear exist? Peace is achieved.

You feel peace within the group when you feel a suspension or total absence of judgmental attitudes. One person can express a concept which may not agree with another, but if there is no competition, no threat, no judgment, then such differences can exist side by side. This is a very complex issue, and you should realize that the solution to what disturbs you, as it pertains to international peace as well as personal peace, is bound up inexorably in feelings of security, in feelings of acceptance, in an atmosphere void of judgment or damnation.

Can this be achieved, really? It will not be achieved totally, for that is not the nature of humankind. No two people are ever totally nonjudgmental with one another. No two people can exist together for long periods of time without any feelings of defensiveness, without any feelings of being somehow affected, challenged. It just cannot happen. It is a worthy goal to strive for because in the striving you become more successful at creating this atmosphere of peace. That atmosphere comes and goes. Your efforts to achieve it only help to prolong its presence, the presence of peace. But because you are human, you will feel at times defensive. Because you are human, you will feel at times threatened. Because countries are made up of humans, they too will feel defensive, occasionally threatened. That is a part of life.

It is not the elimination of such defensiveness which should mark your progress. It is how you deal with it that provides nourishment for your spiritual growth. So often

April 13, 1986

you wish that all were perfect in the world. Believe, it is to be sought after, but all will never be perfect in the world. There is nothing that you as individuals can do to make all perfect in the world, but there is everything that you as individuals can do in controlling how you respond to what happens in your world. There's where the potential is. It is in the dealing with issues that you grow, not in the total elimination, for those issues will constantly be present.

There is no time in your earthly sojourn when you will know God thoroughly. But it is in continuing through your life with an eye toward greater understanding of God that your life takes on form and character and purpose. In short, you grow through the seeking. Growth does not wait until all is known. Your growth is achieved as you seek peace. Growth does not wait until all the Earth is peaceful.

We hope you will not find these words about world peace to be defeatist—that whatever you do will never be enough, that in the end you can do nothing. Quite the contrary. We hope you will feel there is much you can do, and yet recognize that the world is as it is because people are as they are. The world reacts as humans react; there is no division. You wish God to be a part of peace, part of the world scene, so to speak. God certainly is a part of all that occurs, but inasmuch as you seek God's presence in worldly matters, you must seek God's presence in your personal life, remembering that your perception of that presence will understandably differ one from another.

Our prayers are of course for your clearer vision of God, meeting the needs, whatever they may be, that each of you has. We pray that your lives may be drawn closer to God as a result of your perception of God's presence. We are with you constantly. We respond as your needs arise, even without your asking. God's love through us is your love. God's patience through us becomes your patience. God's peace through us becomes your peace.

Amen.