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- *Assisting a friend in need*
- *Responding to those who don't believe in spiritual guidance*

The light of God, the light of all spirits, blends permanently and increases your own lights.

It is true, you share concerns, expressed and not expressed, about others—concerns about how to support, concerns about how to provide meaning, concerns about how to connect others to their own spiritual roots. These concerns for others mirror quite precisely your own hopes for yourselves, for what you seek is an understanding, and what you hope for others is an understanding. There really is no difference between the two. A sense of God's presence is common for all that you wish for others and all that you cry out as your own needs. Those wishes can never be interpreted as selfish, even when they are directed toward your own objectives.

There is nothing to draw you away from the validity and necessity of becoming closer to the Spirit Center of all that is—the presence of Love. There is no selfishness in seeking to connect with Love, for such objectives are never to result in your own elevation or the elevation of others. You pray for strength, not to be stronger, but to serve, to function, to give, to support, to encourage, to reinforce and affirm. That's the purpose of strength. That is what all should seek.

Each of you expresses concerns for your friend who is deeply depressed. Each of you wonders how best to assist his soul, how best to support him as a loving human being who has supported many others. He is indeed going through a dark place. There is much he has not shared with anyone, but his journey is truly not in darkness, for he is held closely by his guide, by your guides, by God.

It is, in short, impossible for you all to do absolutely nothing. You are all doing something, even the expression of concern to one another about someone else is doing something very important, for whenever you express concerns for another, you are giving your light as an illumination to another.

The darkness, though felt, is not really darkness. When you place a barrier between yourselves and others, whether individually or as a group, you are not eliminating light, although you may not be aware of it. In spiritual terms, there is no such thing as absolute darkness. All souls see the light. Even when it is not readily acknowledged, the light is present and can be seen by all. Sometimes it is a small point of light, and other times it is overwhelmingly brilliant and warm, but that light always shines, and that which is eternal in each of you is constantly aware of that presence.

What can you do for someone else who is perceived by self as being in total darkness? You can in your own ways shine light on the path. The most obvious way is through prayer. But in shedding that light on the path, you are also entreated to listen, to be there, to be available, to express love without patronizing. By expressing your own

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concerns openly, you are actually serving to strengthen, not weaken, another. There is no benefit achieved by ignoring what is already there. It is rather for you to respond to what you observe, to what you feel, to the nudges and hints and urgings that lie within each of you.

You may ask how you know what you do is of benefit. You must accept that there is benefit, for that *is* the way of the soul, that *is* the way of love. That is what happens when you are compassionate. There is benefit, there is growth, just by listening and feeling. You may not put an identifying label about a specific benefit being placed on what you do. The benefit is undeniable and immediate.

It is important that each of you is open to expressing yourself as you are moved to do so. For some, it is saying how worried you are about another. For others, it is an offer to be of help in any way. And then for others, it is just to visit and listen. There is much your friend has to share, and each of you in your own way can provide an environment that is recognized immediately as accepting, nonjudgmental, loving. His road is difficult. All human beings have choices to make, and part of his future is dependent upon those choices, for in making those choices he is also enhancing, strengthening, his soul.

You are never expected to make the right choice every time, as you would define "right," but you *can* expect always to make the right choice for everything you do, if you place that choice in the loving hands of God. The decisions may or may not be recognized as "right" by others, but that is never important. All decisions you make are correct when made with the desire for guidance.

You have concerns for many who are going through seemingly great difficulty. The expression, even unvoiced, of those concerns is a guarantee that the love you offer is actually transmitted to the subject of that offering. No loving action, no loving thought, no loving wish is ever orphaned. No such offer, no such wish is denied, for all that you pray for that is for the benefit of others is motivated from spirit.

The objectives in life you choose that you can measure as benefiting self only do not carry with them the spiritual energy of being loving. Yet it is for every human being to seek things that are outside or beyond the grasp because you feel whatever it is that you seek is important. The life of spirit is the seeking of and for spirit, and if you are seeking for the spirit of another, there is nothing higher that you could do. If you are seeking something that brings a loving acceptance, it is precisely the right kind of seeking. Of course, there are times in your lives when you seek what brings comfort to yourself, and that is not altogether bad, for it could be the comfort that you seek becomes the basis for what you give, and it is the giving that is so central to your lives.

There are many who reject our reality, for guidance cannot be completely described in concrete terms. We are who we are, and your acknowledgment of us, or your rejection, has no effect on that reality. We want you to acknowledge spiritual guidance. We want you to accept its reality, for when you do it is easier for us to accept

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you. But those who seek a definitive proof, those who look with intellectual vigor at the issue of our reality, do not find it. They have not lost. They are loved. They are guided. They recognize in others something of themselves, and therefore at that level, they acknowledge there is something beyond who they are. No human being lives entirely alone. Every human being has a sense of "other." That is a part of the development from the very earliest ages.

Each of you knows something about what is permanent. You know the importance of compassion. You know the importance of listening. You know the importance of being nonjudgmental toward another human being. Your lives are therefore always being guided. When you reject our reality, we don't cease to function. An individual who rejects us completely is still being guided. You may go through periods of your own life rejecting the reality of guides, but that doesn't make us go away. That doesn't make us ineffective. As human beings, you are what you are, and as spiritual entities, we are what we are. To the extent that each can engage in the acceptance of the other, all benefit.

There is always the question of what to say to those who choose not to believe. There is, in fact, nothing you can say that will change someone's mind, but there is everything you can *be* that can change that perspective. You have an impact on others because your impact is based on who you are, your understanding of who you are, but that understanding evolves, and therefore none of you respond in an absolute defined perfect state. Allow yourselves to be who you are, and your positive influence on others will be a part of reality.

Don't feel you have to convince. Don't feel you must win an argument. Matters of spirit are not settled in debate. They are settled through experience, your own experience, the experience of others. You must therefore allow that doubt that you observe or that you experience to exist alongside your beliefs. There is a balance of sorts that is created. By expressing true interest in another, you are offering all that can be offered, for that other individual will experience what you provide from his or her own perspective.

What is the message we wish to leave with you? It is one of having faith in who you are, having faith in the power of just being. You do not have to overlay a set of objectives by which you measure your effectiveness. If you pray to be instrumental in helping another, you are instrumental in helping another. It is as simple as that. Often we say you may not know the impact you have on others. The truth of that cannot be denied, but all that you pray for, for reaching out to another with your own individual and collective concerns, can only be of service to another. It will never be sent out into the darkness of nothingness. There is no darkness. There is always some light visible, and your prayers, your nonjudgmental thoughts, penetrate the dusk and reach their objectives.

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So it is with your own lives as you feel discouragement and alienation. You *are* being guided. The light *is* there. When you do not see it or feel it, it is still present. You may be in a dark place. Your house may be shuttered, tightly closed. The sun continues to shine, and the time will come when those shutters are opened and the light comes pouring in. Proceed along your own paths with confidence that the sun *is* shining, that your path *is* illuminated, and when you find your eyes closed to that illumination or you feel that your vision is blocked, you must continue with the knowledge of that most constant Light of all.

You are blessed in that Light. You are guided by that Light. Your path is always illuminated by that Light. When your eyes are unable to see it, believe it is there and find ways of broadening your vision, of doing what you can through prayer, through your presence, through your listening. Open the eyes of others who by themselves find it difficult to see that Light which surrounds them constantly.

You are blessed by your sight of that Light. You are blessed when your eyes are closed. You are blessed when you feel yourselves in darkness. You are blessed when you feel discouraged. You are blessed when you are fearful, full of anxiety. You are always blessed. Allow that understanding to lift you up to the Light that is always shining.

Amen.