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- *Giving and receiving the hand of God*
- *Leadership*
- *Peace requires tolerance and respect*
- *Freeing stuck spirits*
- *Links to the Divine*

*[Prayer message received by James on the evening of the New Hampshire presidential primary election.]*

It is God who walks with each of you every step that you take. You are continually in the presence of that loving light and gentle hand that leads you across troubled waters to the other side, to a resolution of conflicts, and to a greater understanding of the purpose of your journey. God's loving hand leads by many different ways. Sometimes you are led through your own understanding, but there are times when you are led by the understanding of others.

Each of you experiences moments in your life when you are uncertain or fearful, and it is at moments like that when the hand of God is offered by someone close by. You are all the hands of God, for God impacts and directs human life substantially through the efforts of other human beings. When you seek resolution to conflict in your own lives, such resolutions are brought about by God through others. It is not your mission in life to withdraw the human presence and to just let God "take care of it," as it were. God responds, but you must look to others as evidence of that response.

Such a vision of God's presence requires a leap of faith on your part, for you have to believe in the ultimate good that individuals are capable of exercising. If you approach life suspicious of another, you build the kind of barriers of which we have spoken. Those barriers prevent you from experiencing responses you seek as delivered through the hands of others.

We speak to both sides of what is needed and what is given. It is not just meant to refer to your own needs, but is intended to affirm the importance of your own actions toward others, for it is you who are the hands of God, not just others. The loving hand that is offered is offered with a tender acceptance and embracing countenance. It is offered with the attitude of love, not of gaining something for yourselves in doing what you do.

Without human interaction, God's place within the human condition is somehow diminished—not diminished in fact, but diminished in perception. Without your being involved collectively, it is more difficult to acknowledge that loving presence referred to as God. Therefore, you and all people are precisely what is needed to allow God's influence to be experienced. God is not just something to be hoped for. God is not merely an intellectual convenience. God is very real. God is very engaged, but that engagement, that encounter with human beings is through other human beings.

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You pray for the wisdom of leaders, the wisdom of leadership throughout the world, and you can be assured that the wisdom for which you pray does exist, but it needs to be given life, and it is given life because others pray for it. You wonder how demonstrated leadership is a reflection of God's influence. Any leader is conflicted between what is looked for in terms of self and what is actually needed. All leaders are human and therefore respond to both demands: "what do I want" versus "what is needed." No two individuals have the same capacity to resolve these conflicting influences. Everyone responds differently. No human being, no leader will do what is viewed to be right at all times for all people. Sometimes the best intentions are paved with darkness rather than light. The issue is not the leader; the issue is leadership.

If you want change, if you are committed to the importance of a direction you feel to be more loving, then it is your actions that will ultimately determine the character of that leadership. Any leader of whatever level wishes to be acknowledged as wise and able. No one chooses a path that only leads to criticism. If leaders know that a particular direction is absolutely opposed and has no basis in truth and in rightness, will they continue? Every leader believes there is something being done that is correct. To change the nature of leadership there must be a sea change in the attitude of those being led. Such changes are slow and deliberate.

It is difficult for you to recognize that the world is getting better in terms of an understanding of what it means to respect one another, but viewed in its entirety, that direction is being pursued. You seek peace. All define "peace" according to their own terms. But gradually an understanding of what peace is is evolving into one of tolerance and respect. None of you will see a world at peace, but you must have faith that as long as there are many who are committed to mutual respect, the progress toward that peace is unquestioned.

God directs all of creation in a kind of general way. There are fits and starts, but the general movement is always toward God. There is suffering, there is willful crime, there is annihilation of groups based on what they are, not who they are. There are any number of reasons to conclude that the chances for peace are hopelessly mired, but the truth is that peace *is* growing. The process is difficult, it is painful, but it is God's will that there become an attitude that is widespread leading to mutual respect and freedom.

Martin Luther King's speech about having a dream was absolutely correct. Each of you must have a dream of what you seek, and that dream becomes a beacon that assists you in your efforts. Without the dream, without the hope for a better world, it is impossible to be committed to such an objective. God's presence is indeed everywhere, and your connection to that presence will always be different, one from another. Regardless of that difference, you seek what unites you all.

You wonder about the validity of some spiritual experiences described by others. It is not incorrect to pray and be committed to the release of spirits, for there are many who find it difficult to make the transition to a spiritual life devoid of the physical. The

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causes for being “stuck” as it were, are many. For some, it is of their own doing. They wish to remain with what they know rather than release themselves to what they don’t know. For others, they are held back by those who knew them, who wish them to be back, who don’t want to let them go forward. Much as the souls may wish to continue their own journey, the call from the past is very strong, either what is remembered or what is heard.

And so it is that each individual has the ability to free another. You may not know whether another is indeed stuck between their human experience and the greater love of the spirit, but it is not important whether you know or don’t know. What is important is to surround those whom you love, those whom you know, those whom you know of with prayers of loving support and a prayer wishing a smooth transition to their greater lives. You don’t need to know a name in order to assist. Just knowing that there are those spirits who are reluctant to stand up in the Light is enough. By recognizing that reality, and recognizing the importance of moving forward in the new Light, all people can assist.

Anything that you do which heightens your acceptance and your understanding of the spirit life is beneficial. Anything that promotes rejection of the spirit life can only hinder its progress. There are countless individuals who are fully unaware of guidance and yet feel compelled to pray to God. That is fine. That is entirely appropriate. You do not need to know of guidance, you do not need to know of the greater journey of the soul in order to ask God for help. The mere asking, the mere turning of attention to the possibility of God is beneficial and has purpose.

There are therefore many ways that such growth takes place. For you, there is the connection with your spirit guides. For others, it is seeing a kind of light. For still others, it is hearing a voice or speaking or writing. There are many connections that link the human to the divine, and all those connections are valid for those people. When such validity is shared with others, there is an identity that is created. That is as it always has been. That is the way all religions in the world have begun, simply a shared perspective of a meaningful connection to something beyond the physical experience of life.

There is no effort when directed toward the spirit that is invalid. There is no language or speech that is more valid than another. The language has meaning. As long as it has meaning, it is a way of communicating. The connection to God that is chosen is valid because it has meaning. It is a view of God, and it is a reflection of the believers.

You are blessed in your shared meaning that you give your guides. Others are blessed regardless of their ignorance of the guides, but their acknowledgment of a God by whatever name—that Love Center, that Spirit Center—is affirmed. Serve your human lives through the dignity of listening and being and responding as you can, and you will be the hands of God. Your lives will have purpose. You will sense value in what you do,

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and you will be elevating humankind toward a greater awareness of the meaning of peace.

You are blessed in your efforts. You are blessed in your visions. You are blessed in your sight. We're blessed in your very presence. God sheds light upon all of your paths. Rejoice and be thankful!

Amen.