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- *Compassionate listening provides strength*
- *Work to bring about that for which you pray*
- *Healing is a community achievement*

[Note: This message was received just after the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City.]

God joins each of your souls together. There is a large host of souls assembled, guides beyond your group. When you pray for others, you bring them to you. A prayer on behalf of another is always an invitation to the guide belonging to another. So the guides of each for whom you have prayed are united.

You have spoken this evening of the need for healing and of the potential for healing. Each of you has within you the seeds of healing. There is often too much chatter between those seeds of healing and your recognition of them.

There is great benefit in reaching down inside and trying to understand why it is you feel as you do, why it is you may suffer from whatever affliction it is. Is it a concept that has been fulfilled? Is it some kind of subtle wish or a sense of guilt that brings a concept to fulfillment? It can indeed be all of these roots. The recognition of those real roots of illness is a difficult path to follow. Some are more successful than others, but although you must guard yourself, protect yourself, you must also recognize that much protection is achieved through the compassionate act of listening.

If one is suffering and you listen compassionately, you do not make that suffering your suffering, but you lend your strength to another in order to provide protection for another. You exist in a society, not to be isolated from it through a protective shield, but to provide strength which is a kind of protection to others. You provide this strength by listening, by being present, not necessarily by doing or telling or instructing. The compassionate presence is the greatest protection that you can offer.

Quite contrary to the need to isolate yourself is the real need for involving yourself in the sufferings of others. It does not mean suffering with them. It means providing strength. That is what living in a society means. There are, however, countless people who associate society with ills, not necessarily physical ills, but spiritual ills. The result is cynicism, a critical view of all that surrounds one.

Cynicism has no place in society. You all know individuals whose perspective on life is cynical, fatalistic, defeatist, negative, isolationist. These are not properties of spiritual life, but they are the goals that a spiritual life wishes to overcome. It is easy to be cynical, for such an attitude takes away a sense of responsibility and accountability. For a cynic, responsibility always lies on the shoulder of another. There is never the sense that one is responsible for much that can be done. Living in a society means overcoming or rising above those negative elements.

The healing process in society, just as the healing process of the body, requires moving beyond fatalism, moving beyond this cynicism, moving beyond just merely a

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hope toward real action, toward taking responsibility for making a change. If you are ill, you should take the initiative for your own care. If another is ill, you should take the initiative to support another. If society is ill, you should have the initiative to lead others in a direction that overcomes those ills.

Everyone has the potential for benefiting the life of another, and therefore by extension everyone has the potential of benefiting the life of others in the plural sense. You can make a difference in your own lives. You can make a difference in the lives of many. That difference is effected through your attitudes. Those attitudes are given focus through your sense of spiritual presence and spiritual strength—your own spiritual strength—for you are actually what makes a difference in society. It is your spiritual action that brings the result for which you all pray.

Praying that benefit be given to another does not mean relinquishing the responsibility for making that benefit happen. It means doing what you can on your own to help bring about that for which you pray. If you pray for peace in your community, you don't pray that others do something to enhance that peace; you pray that *you* do something to enhance that peace. If you pray that another be healed, then you pray that *you* are a part of the healing process, not that someone else does the healing. When it is the growth of another that is of concern, it is *you* who must do the nurturing, not some unknown other.

It keeps returning to the "you" in the equation. For peace to be achieved, *you* must work for it. For healing in society, *you* must work for it. For the healing of another human being, *you* must help provide the atmosphere conducive to healing. For healing of your own lives, *you* must be a part of that process. It cannot always be done alone. It frequently requires the help of others, but you must remember that *you* are the "others" that is required.

It is a collective effort. It is a collective effort to create peace. It is a collective effort to encourage healing. It is a collective effort to be healed. You have the roots for healing within you, that is true, but you are incapable of fully, adequately healing yourselves alone. There is always the need for the help of others. It may be spiritual help, it may be psychological help, medical help, the help offered by the presence of someone else, the quiet, listening, compassionate presence of which we have spoken. But no true healing is fully achieved alone. Healing is a community achievement.

All need healing. There is no one without need of healing. Some may need physical healing. Others may need emotional healing, spiritual healing or redirection. All have needs and all have the responsibility of responding to the needs of others as they can. There is no competition here. No one is to recognize that one has helped more than another. No one can be pointed out as contributing less than another. You contribute what you can. You contribute according to your own strengths. What is important is the contribution, not the specifics.

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The healing for which you have prayed this evening is being achieved. It is being achieved because each of you is committed to helping the other. Each of you wants to see the other brought to a place of strength, of equilibrium, of balance, whether that is medically, emotionally, spiritually achieved. It is what you all look for, for each other and for you as individuals.

When you pray, whether for peace or reconciliation or health, you are really praying for healing, healing of society or healing of the body. It is really all the same. There is no true distinction.

Each of you is strengthened in your spiritual self as all are strengthened. You do not grow spiritually unless others who are with you also grow. Your growth is achieved through the growth of others, and the growth of the group is achieved through the growth of the individual. Both group growth and individual growth are absolutely united and interdependent.

If you wish to be healed yourselves, then recognize the necessity of healing a much wider community. A community's development becomes yours, just as your development becomes the community's development. The interrelationship is permanent, strong, and clear.

Your guides are dependent upon you for their development, and you are dependent upon the development of your guides. We pray for your healing, but you must pray for ours as well. Though we may not suffer physical ailments, we all are in need of healing, of being strengthened, of being given a clear view, of sensing God more immediately. All of this is part of healing.

In the events of this past week in Oklahoma City, there is a seed of healing which has been planted nationally. It is at such times of tragedy that all are reminded of the importance of compassion and of mutual concern. Grow from that experience. Recognize the suffering, but also rejoice in the healing which takes place.

We pray for your continued strength, for your greater awareness of who you really are. We pray for your clearer vision of God and for your total acceptance of our presence in your lives. God surrounds your lives with healing strength and with loving presence.

Amen.