

**WHAT I KNOW FOR SURE
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When I turned on the television on the morning of Sept. 11, I sat down on the couch immovable, my mouth wide open, telling myself that this could not be happening. Over the ensuing days since, it still seems surreal. I am having difficulty processing what has happened to our country, but I know that I must squarely grapple with reality.

I have listened to our political leaders proclaim that they are going to eradicate the evil that caused these catastrophes. They talk of war, of killing those responsible for these acts of violence. What I know for sure is that this will not be a lasting solution to the problem. First of all, it is impossible to kill all of the people who have such hatred in their hearts. Second, killing in response to killing only perpetuates the karmic cycle.

What I also know for sure is that the only way to have lasting peace in the world is to change people's hearts from the inside. How do we do this?

Now is the time for each one of us to search our souls to reaffirm why we practice Buddhism. What has become clear to me is that my Buddhist practice is more than just about me receiving benefits. No matter what I have or strive to achieve, I will never be able to enjoy my life without there being peace in the world. I am understanding on a much deeper level the connectedness of all things. I shared in the grief of those roaming the streets looking for lost loved ones or those that had received confirmation that their loved ones had died. My heart aches terribly, and solving the root cause of this act of terrorism so that it will never happen again has become my obsession.

Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism makes it clear that only by reforming ourselves from the inside can we make lasting change both individually as well as collectively. Negativity resides within each one of our lives. We must be given the tools to learn how to win over it.

Nichiren Daishonin clearly tells us: "Muster your faith, and pray to this Gohonzon. Then what is there that cannot be achieved?" (*The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, p. 412). He also warns us: "But your faith alone will determine all of these things. A sword is useless in the hands of a coward. The mighty sword of the Lotus Sutra must be wielded by one courageous in faith" (WND, 412).

It is easy to be moved at the time of a crisis, but we human beings have a highly developed ability to avoid what is unpleasant. We too easily forget lessons learned. As a tribute to all of those who lost their lives, we must never forget Sept. 11, 2001 — we must ensure that the lives lost were not in vain.

We must seize this moment to change poison into medicine. SGI President Ikeda states: "Adversity gives birth to greatness. The greater the challenges and difficulties we face, the greater opportunity we have to grow and develop as people. A life without adversity, a life of ease and comfort, produces nothing and leaves us with nothing. This is one of the indisputable facts of life" (*For Today and Tomorrow*, p. 127).

What I know for sure is that each one of us can make a difference. One by one, let's pray deeply and profoundly to open up the Buddhahood within each person's life that we encounter, and to be able to share Buddhism with them naturally. Let's eradicate the root cause of hatred from within each person's heart. Nam-myoho-rence-kyo is the great medicine that can solve all ills. We must believe this like never before and, together, we will change our community, our state, our country and our world.

The time to spread the Daishonin's Buddhism is now. Of this I am certain.