



March, 2018

Expressions

A Publication of the CLAREMONT CENTER FOR SPIRITUAL LIVING
509 S. College Ave, Claremont, CA 91711 / 909-624-3549



*Rabbi Rami
Shapiro*

Editor's Note: Rabbi Rami Shapiro writes the advice column "Roadside Assistance for the Spiritual Traveler" in Spirituality & Health magazine. These three items are taken from the January/February 2018 issue.

Do I have to believe that God wrote the Bible in order to find the book meaningful?

No. I consider the Bible to be a human document mirroring the best and worst of humanity. When the Bible speaks of a day of rest for both people and animals (Exodus 20:10), challenges us to be a blessing to all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:3), roots its ethics in loving neighbor, stranger, and enemies (Leviticus 19:18,34; Matthew 5:44), and anchors justice in caring for the disenfranchised and powerless (Exodus 22:21-24; Matthew 25:40), we glimpse the best of humanity. When the Bible tells us to commit genocide (1 Samuel 15:1-9), to "show no mercy" toward our enemies (Deuteronomy ("Spiritual Traveler" continues on Page 2...)

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Ed Graff, Interim Editor



("Spiritual Traveler" – continued from Page 1...) 7:2), and divides people into sheep and goats, the one to be saved (Matthew 25:34) and the other damned (Matthew 25:41), we glimpse the dark side of humanity. The Bible shows us both, that we might cultivate the former and curtail the latter. Sadly, too many of us do exactly the opposite.

I grew up in Orthodox Judaism, where Shabbat services droned on for hours. I now belong to a Reform synagogue, where services are shorter but no less boring. In the end, I feel I've wasted my time. How can I change this?

Religious services are theater. Good theater challenges you intellectually, moves you emotionally, uplifts you aesthetically, and envelops you in something greater than yourself: be it community, nature, or God. Bad theater does none of this, and leaves you feeling bored, drained, and empty. The key is to find a

spiritual home where the services are at least as compelling as a good movie. Indeed, spending each Sabbath afternoon watching a good movie with friends may be just the change you need. Of course, that still leaves the morning for Torah study and Shabbat services.

I'm a Muslim. I'm proud of my faith but frightened for my religion. Can it be that a religion can go mad?

Every religion has its xenophobic dark side sanctioning evil in the name of good. When followers of a religion surrender their conscience to cult, their faith to fanaticism, and their reason to the irrational masquerading as revelation, they are infecting their religion with a poison that can only lead to madness and violence. If you want to save your religion, or any religion, understand its texts as myth and metaphor, and hold its teachings to the cleansing fires of compassion, justice, love, science, and reason.

As we honor the saints of all religions (the Bible actually says WE are the Living Saints) I would like to offer the following link to easy guided meditations for you. The meditations are provided by the Self-Realization Fellowship, founded in 1928 by Paramahansa Yogananda:

https://www.yogananda-srf.org/Guided_Meditations.aspx

I especially love the one on "Expanding Love," so needed at this time. I hope you love it, too.

Peace and continued blessings,
Lydia Santa-Cruz



Paramahansa Yogananda



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"What Can Animals Teach Us About Spirituality?"

Part 2, by Diane Clements

Editor's Note: A few years ago, Diane Clements gave a Wednesday night talk about the spiritual lessons we can learn from animals. This is the second excerpt from her talk. The first was in the November 2017 issue of 'Expressions.' More to follow...

Do you ever come home in a bad mood and shun your pet? Maybe you're so upset you brush it off. You want time to sulk or get on the phone and be angry.

Later you're calm, you call your pet to you, and what happens? Most of the time the pet comes right to you and showers you with its usual affection.

It's an amazing gift of an animal that when they have been rebuked or mistreated, they usually respond again to kindness. This is a spiritual gift we humans should learn. It's called "LETTING GO AND MOVING FORWARD."

The shelters are full of animals that have been abused, but most of them will warm up to humans if coaxed with kindness. My little Yorkie was adopted from the Riverside shelter. When we went to see her, she jumped into my arms and clung to me and would not let us put her down. She didn't want to play, she just wanted to be held and petted. We could see she went through something that hurt her but she was totally lovable.

She is now a healthy, playful dog. Her only bad habit was a nervous bark that I couldn't figure out how to stop. One day I picked up a fly swatter to kill a pesky fly and she shivered, ran to her bed and cowered down. We have never hit any of our pets, but it gave me an idea: when she



went into her Yorkie Terrier bark-a-thon I went for the flyswatter and said, "SHHHHHH!" She lowered her head, stopped barking and sat in her bed. All she has to see is the flyswatter. Yet she has never bitten or withheld any affection, so whatever caused her to fear the swatter she has let go of.

Dogs don't live in the past. We could do ourselves a favor if we could move through past traumas and let them go.



You Can Read Past Issues of 'Expressions'!

Our Web Guru, Jeff Harrison, has made it possible to read and download past issues of the 'Expressions' newsletter. (He also updates the Claremont CSL home page, www.claremontcsl.org, with links to the 5 most recent Sunday morning messages.)

For past issues of 'Expressions,' go to: <http://www.claremontcsl.org/expressions/expressions.html>

And if you have something you would like to contribute - a poem, prayer, article, meditation, book recommendation - you can email them to:

eemgraffvz@gmail.com

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'Failure'

From Wired Magazine, May 2013

You couldn't ask for a more elegant experiment. Beginning in the 1880s, Albert Michelson set out to demonstrate that light waves travel through "luminiferous ether." This all-pervasive ether was a supposedly mysterious substance that allowed light waves to become visible just as air makes sound audible.

Never directly detected, the ether was theorized to behave like an ocean, complete with sea currents. Just as the spin of our planet drags our oceans behind it, so the luminiferous ether must also dawdle, and therefore light would travel at different speeds depending on the direction you shoot a beam. To measure these subtle distinctions, Michelson built an instrument called an interferometer.

His experiment with it fell flat. Michelson detected no difference, because there was none, nor was there any such thing as luminiferous ether. While it took almost two decades to explain, Michelson had shown that the speed of light is constant and that light doesn't travel through any substrate, opening the door for relativity.

In 1907 Michelson was awarded the Nobel Prize for a career built on that first outright failure.

Like science, the tech business is a success-driven profession. Yet countless Silicon Valley

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startups have also shown that failure is often a requisite for success. Think of all the products that revealed paths forward through their failings, like the first release of Android, slammed by TechRepublic as one of the five worst products of 2009. Or remember the Apple Newton, the flop that eventually led to the iPhone.

Speaking of which, Steve Jobs himself had to fail as CEO of NeXT – learning what kinds of novelties consumers will and won't accept – for Apple to become the powerhouse of innovation it is today.

Just as the misbegotten experiment of Albert Michelson reversed a scientific assumption, the wrong idea often fortuitously leads us to ask the right questions.



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Meditation for Maundy Thursday

Diana R.G. Trautwein, March 28, 2013

Exodus 12:1-4, 11-14; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-17;
I Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35

This is a strange day, in the midst of a strange week, in the midst of a very strange story. This story of ours, the one we know so well, and yet not at all; this story, which if I let it do its work, well. . . it just knocks the breath right out of me.

It's a hard story and a beautiful one, a story that demands response, that can't be entered into partially, that carries import we cannot always see. ... Because we can choose to believe it every day — to tell it every day, to live it every day, to let it live us, live in us. We, such ordinary, falling-down, messing-it-up disciples — yes, we can choose to let this story be told through our everyday lives....

Such a strange word to our ears, Maundy, and no etymologist has completely nailed down its origin. The likeliest way we got this adjective is this: the Latin word for 'commandment' is *mandatum* which by some process of evolution became Maundy in English.

- This is the day in which Jesus gives his disciples a 'new commandment.'
- This is the day in which Jesus models that commandment to the ragged band of followers gathered round the dinner table with him.

- This is the day when Judas sneaks off into the night to begin the undoing process.
- This is the day and the night when Jesus eats and drinks and touches and loves and prays.
- **This is the last time that Jesus is a free man.**

John's gospel never speaks of a 'last supper' like the other gospel writers do, so chapter 13 is the closest thing we've got. There is no mention of bread and cup in this passage. There is no admonition to 'remember.' Instead, there is a strong visual aid and there are these words:

"For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

Even on the last night of his life, Jesus is beating the same drum: hearing is good, doing is better; knowledge is good, doing is better. If the story is to be told, it has to be lived.

Do You Have...

- ... a favorite poem, affirmation, excerpt from a book or magazine article?
 - ... a work of art that sparks your imagination?
 - ... insights of your own you want to share?
- Expressions* is the Claremont CSL journal, and we invite discussions and observations from a broad range of viewpoints. Please send your contributions to: eemgraffvz@gmail.com
Thank you!

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Calendar of Events for March, 2018

Claremont CSL Events

Ongoing Events:

Sundays -

AA Meetings, 8 AM; Chapel

Meditation, 10 AM; Chapel

Sunday Service, 10:30 AM; Sanctuary

Fellowship Hour, 11:30 AM; Holmes Hall

Apostolic Church, 2:00 PM; Chapel

Living Proof Meeting, 4:30 PM; Chapel

Mondays -

ManKind Project, 7 PM; Chapel

Wednesdays -

Meditation, 6:15 PM; Practitioner Room

Wednesday Service, 7 PM; Chapel

Thursdays -

Kindly Conversations, 10 AM; Chapel

Saturdays -

Yoga Class, 9:30 AM; Chapel

For March:

Foundations Class, 6:30-9:30 PM Tuesdays;

Board Room

Brown-Bag Lunch with Rev. Tracy,

Thursday 3/8 & 3/22, 11:30 AM;

Board Room

Drum Circle, Saturday 3/3, 3-5 PM; Chapel

Board Meeting, Sunday 3/18, 12:30-2:30 PM;

Board Room

“Gandhi’s Awakening” movie presentation
and discussion,

Saturday, 3/24, 6:00 PM, Chapel

Sunday, 3/25, 1:00 PM, Chapel

Sacred and Cultural Events

- 1 Purim (Jewish) - begins at sundown on Feb. 28.
- 2 Holi (Hindu) - a celebration of color and food.
- 11 Daylight Saving Time begins: set clocks forward 1 hour at 2 AM Sunday.
- 17 St. Patrick’s Day
- 20 Spring Equinox - night and day are the same length. First day of Spring.
- 25 Rama Navami (Hindu) - part of the spring festival, celebrating the birth of the god Rama.
- 25 Palm Sunday (Christian) - celebrating Jesus’ return to Jerusalem, the beginning of Holy Week.
- 29 Maundy Thursday (Christian) - commemorates the last supper, when Jesus consecrated the bread and wine and initiated the Holy Communion, or the sacrament “Eucharist.”
- 30 Good Friday (Christian) - commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus.
- 31 Holy Saturday (Christian) - the first day that Jesus lay in his tomb.
- 31 Passover (Jewish) - starts at sundown on Friday, the 15th day of Nison according to the Jewish lunar calendar. (Dates vary on the Gregorian calendar.)
Commemorates the liberation of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt.



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Licensed Practitioners

You can email prayer requests to:

prayer@claremontcsl.org

You may also call Practitioners directly at the following numbers:

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