

Expressions

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



"Who Among Us?"

A Vedic Meditation by Jeff Kober

You think you are this little pool of stagnant water that stands on the way with no movement whatsoever. The Guru says, "Look my dear fellow, you are a lion, you are not a goat. You are not this little pond of stagnant dirty water that stands there, you are the ocean. So don't live under the illusion that you are the limited. You are the unlimited"!

– Sri M.

We humans are very accommodating creatures. We will follow rules, always. Even if the rule is not to follow the rules. We allow ourselves to be guided - whether by our hunger or need, our opinions, our sense of right and wrong. Something, always, is guiding us.

Where does this guidance generally reside? In our thinking. How much attention do we ("Who Among Us" continues on Page 2...)

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Edward Graff, Interim Editor



("Who Among Us," continued from Page 1...) generally pay to what is guiding us at any given moment? Very little. If we paid attention, we would see that our thoughts and opinions of ourselves are oftentimes quite harsh and negative. If we are being guided by harsh and negative thoughts and opinions of self, then the life we are building will tend to be harsh and negative.

All it takes to change this is to become aware of it, and to put something into our thinking that is 'other' than the negativity that so often is residing there. This is what the Guru is. 'Guru' means 'bringer of light.' Guru shines the light on our thinking, and uplifts it to be more in alignment with the truth of our being. The Truth that we are not the little pond of stagnant water, but rather the whole of the ocean.

How often do we need to have our thinking uplifted? Perhaps as long as we are in a body.

Where do we find Guru? If you have made it this far in the reading, then these words are Guru enough for this moment. And we both will walk away from this exchange uplifted.

What more could we possibly ask for?

Today I will allow some words, some image, some person, some idea to enter my thinking and uplift it. And as I am uplifted, I will make a point to pass it on to someone else, with a smile, a look, a kind word, a kind thought. Like this, I will offer myself as a bringer of light to my world.

*Found and shared by Rev. Tracy Earlywine.
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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 our 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

Support Claremont CSL While Shopping At "smile.amazon.com"!

If you shop at Amazon.com you could support Claremont CSL with every purchase:

1. Go to <https://smile.amazon.com>
2. Log in with your regular Amazon account or "Sign Up" if you're a new user.
3. Select "Claremont Center for Spiritual Living" as your charitable organization.

All prices are the same, but 0.5% of your eligible purchases go to our congregation!

(By the way, you can also paste this address into your browser and log in there...

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/95-2049147>

It's specifically for our church.)

Thank You!



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One Art

by Elizabeth Bishop

The art of losing isn't hard to master;
so many things seem filled with the intent
to be lost that their loss is no disaster.

Lose something every day. Accept the fluster
of lost door keys, the hour badly spent.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

Then practice losing farther, losing faster:
places, and names, and where it was you meant
to travel. None of these will bring disaster.

I lost my mother's watch. And look! my last, or
next-to-last, of three loved houses went.
The art of losing isn't hard to master.

I lost two cities, lovely ones. And, vaster,
some realms I owned, two rivers, a continent.
I miss them, but it wasn't a disaster.

Even losing you (the joking voice, a gesture
I love) I shan't have lied. It's evident
the art of losing's not too hard to master
though it may look like (Write it!) like disaster.

"One Art" from THE COMPLETE POEMS 1927-
1979 by Elizabeth Bishop.



Jane Shore Comments

on the poem
"One Art"

What's so interesting about this poem, both reading it on the page and reading it out loud, is in the beginning Bishop is like a school marm, instructing us how to lose.

Then the poem proceeds and the things she loses, which start out with really quite small things, get larger and larger and larger. First it's losing some time, then it's the watch, then it's years, and then it's door keys, then a house, then it ends up being a whole continent. So it starts from small to large.

But the largest loss of all, which you cannot master, is the loss of this other person, whom she loves. So by the end of the poem she's really telling herself, "I'm going to try to comfort myself and live with this." She's instructing us at the beginning of the poem and she's really instructing herself at the end of the poem.

And of course, her way to deal with it is to write it. Maybe that will be the art that will help her with her loss.

Jane Shore is a George Washington University professor and poet. She has taught the poem "One Art" for the last 25 years or so. She was one of Bishop's students in the 70s, and later became her colleague at Harvard University. Jane Shore's latest book is titled A Yes-or-No Answer.

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Surfboards, Palm Beach, New South Wales, Australia
Found and shared by Rev. Tracy Earlywine

Amazing English Words...

There are two words in English that, without any changes to their spelling, are both synonyms and antonyms: “retiring” and “outgoing.”

When they refer to leaving a job, they are synonyms: “Sally is the *retiring* Head of Tech Services” means the same thing as “Sally is the *outgoing* Head of Tech Services.”

When they refer to social situations, they are antonyms: “Sally is *retiring* at parties” is the opposite of “Sally is *outgoing* at parties.”



ONE

One tree can start a forest.
One smile can begin a friendship.
One hand can lift a soul.
One word can frame a goal.
One candle can wipe out darkness.
One laugh can conquer gloom.
One hope can raise your spirits.
One touch can show you care.
One life can make the difference.
Be that one today.

Found and shared by Micki Daniels



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My Favorite Koan

by Edward Graff

The Koan

The master of a Zen monastery was nearing the end of his life and wanted to choose his successor. The two final candidates were the librarian and the cook.

The master called them into a room and had them sit on the floor opposite him, with a vase between himself and the candidates. The vase was half-filled with water.

Pointing to the vase, the master said to the candidates: "Tell me what this is without describing it."

After both candidates had meditated, the librarian said, "I do not see a shoe."

The cook stood, went to the vase, and tipped it over.

What I draw from this koan

You might want to think about it yourself for a few days before reading further...

The librarian gave the first sentence of a very long answer: By listing all the things a thing is not, you are finally left with a negative space that can only be filled by the thing itself. This answer must include all attributes of color, size, shape, and function that don't fit the thing itself. It's a bit like those pictures that, at first glance, all you see are odd shapes. But when you focus on the spaces between the shapes you see letters and words.

This answer reminds me of an ancient Chinese ink drawing I once saw titled "The River." The drawing was of everything *except*

the river. The river was empty space between its two banks, with their clutter of buildings and trees and paths and boat docks.

With this approach, the librarian acknowledges that to describe any thing is to limit that thing. Still, to be a "thing," it must exist separately from all other "things." We are all one, yet we are each distinct from one another – and you are that which every one and every thing else is not. Even as your mind contemplates the Infinite, it searches areas and ideas that many others have not explored. And what you draw from that contemplation is unique to you.

The cook gave an immediate, existential answer: He tips over the vase. With no words at all, he demonstrates to people of every language that this is (or was) a vase with water. In fact, if we only heard the vase tip over and the water spill, we would have known what it was without seeing it.

With this example in mind, can you describe Spirit without the limitation of words? Can you allow It to be Itself?

As the vase tipped over, all its contents spilled out onto the floor. As the side of the vase itself hit the floor, it was in danger of breaking and no longer being a vase at all.

With this example in mind, can you describe yourself without words?

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Calendar of Events for May, 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 May:

- 5 Drum Circle, Chapel, 3-5 PM
- 6 Call to Prayer Sunday during service, also Potluck Sunday in Holmes Hall
- 10 Brown Bag Lunch with Rev. Tracy, 11:30 AM, Board Room
- 11 Sacred Frequencies Sound Meditation, 7-8:30 PM, Chapel
- 20 Board of Trustees Meeting, 12:30 PM, Board Room
- 24 Brown Bag Lunch with Rev. Tracy, 11:30 AM, Board Room

Sacred and Cultural Events

- 1 May Day - originally a day to leave baskets with treats or flowers on someone's door step. If the recipient caught the giver, a kiss was exchanged.
- 1 Laylat al Bara'at (Muslim) - the 15th day of Shaban on the Islamic calendar. It commemorates the day God descends from heaven and forgives sins.
- 3 National Day of Prayer - all faiths pray for the United States and its leaders.
- 3 Lag BaOmer (Jewish) - Celebrates the life of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai of the 2nd century CE.
- 5 Cinco de Mayo
- 13 Mother's Day - originated by Julia Ward Howe in Boston around 1870 to rally women to promote pacifism and disarmament.
- 16 Beginning of Ramadan (Muslim) - the most blessed month of the Muslim calendar, when the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.
- 20 Shavuot (Jewish) - celebrates the revelation of the Five Books of the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai.
- 20 Pentecost (Christian) - celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles.
- 28 Memorial Day - a day to honor those who died serving in the United States military.



Licensed Practitioners

You can email prayer requests to:

prayer@claremontcsl.org

You may also call Practitioners directly at the following numbers:

Neysa Burrous, RScP
909-948-6929
Diane Clements, RScP
909-947-5197
Marianne Breen, RScP
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Ima Lee Moore, RScP
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909-636-7690
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Sacred Service Team Members

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