

The Eternal Way

February – March 2005

The Parable of the Commanding Officer

Let me relate to you the parable of the commanding officer. Once there was a captain of a ship, known as Captain Presson, and he was having heart trouble. The captain's doctor encouraged him to stay in his quarters for rest and rehab. His chest and heart area had periodic pain which would incapacitate him for a number of days with breathlessness and weakness. Usually with rest and improved nourishment, he could resume his commanding officer duties after a few days.

The story of how he got this way dates back to his days at the training academy some 30 years earlier. He was a young trainee and at the end of a particularly hard day of training exercises. He was at dinner in the academy cafeteria and eating with other trainees. Patience and courtesy were thin among the hungry and tired corps. The young and self-assured officer trainee, Presson, got up from his cafeteria seat and bumped into another trainee. A few challenging words were exchanged and a fight ensued. After the brief but vicious struggle was over, the ensign Presson was left with a stab wound with a kitchen knife through his back and lodged in his heart. He went to the hospital for immediate surgery and the other promising trainee was expelled permanently from the academy for failure to control his behavior regardless of who started the provocation. It appeared that two promising careers were ended. Emergency surgery luckily saved his life and Presson went on to graduate from school with honors and ascended the ranks of officers to eventually become captain.

Of course, he had the problem of periodic chest pain that plagued him. Occasionally, he even spit up blood during really stressful times of his career and of course this deeply concerned him. Today was one of those days where he had some bleeding and was feeling particularly vulnerable.

In a quiet moment of prayer, he wished he had never had the provocation that day at the academy. If only he had minded his own business that day...if only he had been less arrogant and more reserved....

But he was tired now and felt like he needed to sleep...suddenly someone he had never seen before was at the foot of his bed. At first he thought it was a new medical staffer. But there was something very different about this person. She seemed to have a real glow about her. The next thing he knew, this person introduced herself as an ambassador of God. "*An ambassador of God,*" he chuckled. "Oh, right! And I am the tooth fairy," he exhorted back. "What on earth was an ambassador of God doing here?" he asked with more than a hint of cynicism.

The ambassador replied, "Well, if you recall, you did pray and God always answers prayers. And since you asked for that day in the past never to have happened, I am here on behalf of God to make that happen." Well, before Presson could even challenge this as ludicrous...SHAZAAM...he was back at the academy. Moreover, he was back in the cafeteria just about to finish that meal and get up and have that fateful encounter with that fateful moment...the knife... where his life would change forever. Only this time, he could decide to act differently. And so he did. And when the other trainee threatened him for bumping into him, Presson just backed down. Boy, was he happy and proud of himself. Now he would avoid the life of trauma, the rehab, the periodic chest pains...and the cough with blood in it.

But over the next few months at the academy, Presson noticed that he was being looked over by the superior officers for higher training. His personality and theirs just didn't seem to connect. He didn't remember school being this way. What was going wrong? After all, he had avoided the horrible cafeteria brawl, the wound, the surgery, and the rehab. To the contrary, he had been the one his superior officers were doing back flips over as the prized, up-and-coming graduate. But not this time. It was in this moment that Presson realized what had happened. *It was the rehab, the pain, the struggle to recover, the dynamic will to live and survive that brought out his officer qualities.* It was that very incident 30 years ago that made him who

he was and without it, he would never be who he had finally become. In that moment, he prayed for the flashback to the past to be over. He was willing to be thankful for what had happened to him and to carry on with a new sense of appreciation and vigor. Again, within moments, God's ambassador revealed herself. And yes, she was there to return Presson to his commanding officer position. But there was one requirement. Since he had returned to the past and avoided that fateful moment, he would have to redo that moment one more time. And this time, Presson would have to allow that stabbing to occur and not avoid it if he was to return to his life as captain. Of course, Presson agreed quickly, but was about to argue on this technicality to go through with this again when...SHAZAAM...he was in the cafeteria again about to get up from that meal. This was the moment of truth, the pivotal moment of his life where his original prayer to be all he could be would be brought to bear by the ensuing incident. He got up, bumped into his fellow trainee, fought, and took the blade once more...and this time with complete appreciation for all it had helped him to become. Strangely, he relished the power of this moment with keen observation and poise.

This is the way it is with our life. Everything that has happened up to his point has molded and shaped our present. With appreciation and love for each moment and *challenge*, we can be assured that the hand of God is sculpting and polishing each of us into magnificent brilliance. The One Source, emanating as us, will only be satisfied by expressing the fullness of Itself through us.



God Within You

by Shara Amelia

A self-proclaimed master gave a formulaic response to a man calling to ask him what to do as he felt stuck in his spiritual growth. The teacher said "Do x, y, and z and you'll reach higher consciousness. It is because you are not following these practices that you are stuck." The teacher would have given the same formulaic response to any of hundreds calling to ask similar questions no matter their language or particulars. The model was the familiar one that the master is without, directing us how to go forward in the most generic of terms--those of the master.

After the tsunamis many religious leaders were interviewed to give retroactive meaning to the events of the region. Some 200,000 people died due to their particular karma or their state of sinfulness the various meaning makers offered. But both proactive and retroactive meaning given generically through a specific lens falls utterly short. It is only as we suffer through a series of unfortunate events ourselves that the appliquéd nature of dogma unravels.

We begin to see things, little tiny things that were formerly hidden in the shadow of our ego-self to consider. At least...at least...the temple stood. There is a body to identify. Massive donations arrived. The shock of what is gone and glimpses of what yet remains and the great mystery of why that is so have to be seen through our own eyes, the guru within. For who can assign meaning to such things for you but *God within you*, through prayer and meditation, on your own terms?

Shara Amelia has a B.A. in English Literature, an M.A. in Linguistics, an M.S. in Oriental Medicine, and is a staff member at the Eternal Way.

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Front page article by Rocco benRoy unless otherwise noted. Rocco benRoy is the minister-director of the Eternal Way. His training and ordination are in the spiritually enlivening and holistic tradition of the ancients as taught by his Kriya Yoga mentor, Roy Eugene Davis.

The Eternal Way Center provides personal counseling and group seminars for spiritual realization, emotional and mental clarity, and physical vitality. The center is dedicated to assisting and empowering each responsive soul, a living temple of God, to cultivate their innate potential and to express their unique purpose and destiny as divinely intended.

All services and functions are funded by donation support. Come join in. We welcome you, for we serve God in you.

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When Bad Things Happen

by Rudy Davenport

I wanted to avoid writing anything about the terrible tragedy of the tsunami, but it seems I can't help myself. How can anyone on this planet ignore what is perhaps the biggest natural disaster (outside of disease) ever to befall humanity? 200,000 or more dead, unfathomable suffering, broken lives, the earth itself shaken on its axis by the enormity of the energy released by the earthquake which caused the tsunami--all these facts cannot be ignored.

As humans, we have the capacity in our consciousness to search for meaning and purpose in every event. So how should spiritual people, given this human capacity to seek meaning and purpose, view the tsunami?

Here are a few of the spiritual--or religious--viewpoints I have heard:

- 1) God caused the tsunami to punish all those people.
- 2) Although we can't understand the purpose of God, we should praise Him in the midst of this devastation because He is Lord. It was the will of God.
- 3) It was the karma of every person who was affected. They had done bad things in this life or in a past life, and their bad karma was fulfilled by the tsunami.
- 4) If only people were more spiritual, the earth would calm down, and these things would not happen.

I disagree with all these viewpoints. Implicit in them is the belief that this event was caused by God, or by our own actions. Yet we now have the knowledge that events similar to this are happening on worlds where there is no human presence at all. If human karma, or God's punishing anger toward humans, is responsible for disasters on Earth, then why did that comet collide with Saturn? The effect of that event was on an unimaginable scale. The difference? There was no human consciousness on Saturn to suffer, and to question the purpose and meaning of it all. Did the bad karma of the plants and animals on earth millions of years ago cause the probable collision with an asteroid that resulted in the

mass extinction of the dinosaurs? Do plants and animals even create karma, or sin? Was God angry with the dinosaurs?

So how do we develop a spiritual viewpoint of coming to grips with natural disasters? I certainly believe that this existence has come from the Divine, is held in being by the Divine, and will one day return to the Divine. But I don't believe that God is somehow making a conscious choice--a Divinely conscious choice--about where every snowflake or raindrop will fall. The universe has laws such as gravity that govern how things happen. And gravity can keep planets in orbit, or cause us to fall on our faces. But gravity itself is impartial--it just works like it does in all circumstances. So in the very nature of the universe, we can see that change, impermanence, birth, death, pleasure, and suffering are all "built into" the fabric of existence. Things just happen.

I do not assign responsibility to God, nor blame to the actions of the people caught up in the tsunami, for the disaster. Pressure built up on tectonic plates under the surface of the earth. That pressure was released in an event we call an earthquake. That earthquake happened under the ocean, which in turn caused a massive ocean wave we call a tsunami. Since the majority of humans live near the ocean, it was inevitable that humans would suffer when the tsunami reached shore. It just happened. No one was responsible. No one was to blame. Yet I believe that God was with every soul that saw those waves coming--was with them in their fear and panic, and even now is with them in their deaths.

The real and only questions that matter are: What do we do about it? How do we respond? The answers to those questions actually embody the real teachings of Christ, Buddha, Krsna, and Mohammed.

Rudy Davenport has a B.A. in Music and a Master of Divinity Degree. With an extensive background in the devotional traditions of East and West, he provides Pastoral Counseling and teaches the use of Music for Therapy and Meditation at the Eternal Way.

If you want to plan for a year, sow rice.
For ten years, plant trees.
For a hundred years, educate the people.

Chinese Proverb

Good News!

Our sincerest and deepest thanks go out to all those who have continued to build this ministry work in 2004. We are humbly at your service and look forward to 2005. Wonderful things continue to unfold due to your loving support. Thank you and God Bless!

An Invitation to Help the Prayer Path of Faith

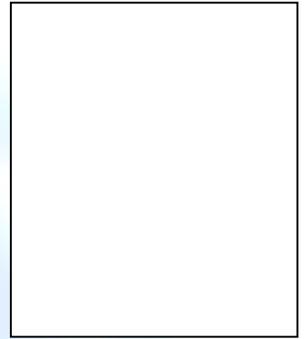
The Prayer of Path of Faith at the Bastrop Retreat is undergoing more improvement. Last year's cleanup of each prayer garden has prepared the seven gardens for individual attention. A significant part of the mission of the Eternal Way is to build bridges between faiths by cultivating the understanding that only Field of Being, One God, has inspired all the various authentic traditions to meet the needs of God's children. There is a Hindu, Jewish, Buddhist, Christian, Native American (Indigenous People), Muslim, and Bahá'í garden.

The first garden honoring the Hindu religion will be improved by adding a couple of sitting benches, a metal icon of the Sanskrit Om symbol and other amenities that will make meditation and relaxation in the garden enjoyable. Approximately \$350 will be needed for the initial items listed. Please help by using the enclosed envelope to send your donation, or call us with any ideas you may have to help at 512-445-1080.

Drug and Alcohol Recovery Work

Remarkable work is being done at the Austin Recovery Center for rehabilitation of those caught in the ravages of drug and alcohol addiction. Rocco benRoy has been doing weekly classes for over three years on

restorative and spiritual living practices. Over \$500 a month is needed to meet the literature distribution requirements of this ministry outreach. Please help make this valuable spiritual work available by supporting the Eternal Way Press publications.



Your Partnership with the Eternal Way is Important

Would you join us? Become a *Spiritual Partner* by devoting \$25, \$75, \$150 or more to the ministry work each month. If you are donating, know you are a vital conduit of God's power manifesting in this world. **Please use the new donation envelope to send your generous support contribution.**

E.A.T. Outreach News

The E.A.T. Outreach is an affirmation that nobody goes hungry, that there is food enough to go around, that "everybody ate today". This outreach picks up and distributes surplus whole grain breads to needy agencies. **Gratitude goes to Paul Thraillkill, Jeff and Gayle Caughey, Teresa Hood and son, Ted, Morris Grieggs, Rudy Davenport, Melanie Irwin, John Stern, and Jeff Johnson, for ongoing volunteer help in picking-up and delivering to an average of 11 agencies per week in the last two months.**

New volunteers are always needed to help with ongoing schedule changes. Call today to help or donate in some way at 512-445-1080.

Feb. – March 05 Wednesday Eve. Service
Weekly Themes Below. All services at 6:30pm

February 2 – The Way to God
 9 – Love Alone Reveals
 16 – It is Your Nature to Love
w/potluck 5:30pm 23 – Scatter the Seeds of Love

March 2 – What is True Love?
 9 – Love Seeks Nothing in Return
 16 – Changelessness of Divine Love
 23 – Divine Love has no Expectation
w/potluck 5:30pm 30 – Love Alone Equals Love

Rocco benRoy's Speaking/Travel Engagements

2/17/05 Austin Men's Group

3/7/05 – 3/15/05 The Prodigy Group, Mumbai (Bombay), India

Every Tuesday at **Austin Recovery Center** for individuals in drug and alcohol recovery. **9AM**

Contact us if you would like directions or additional information.

Kriya Yoga SatSang – Every Saturday at 11am
at the Eternal Way for initiates and sincere seekers in the constructive living tradition of the ancients. Asanas, meditation, and techniques!