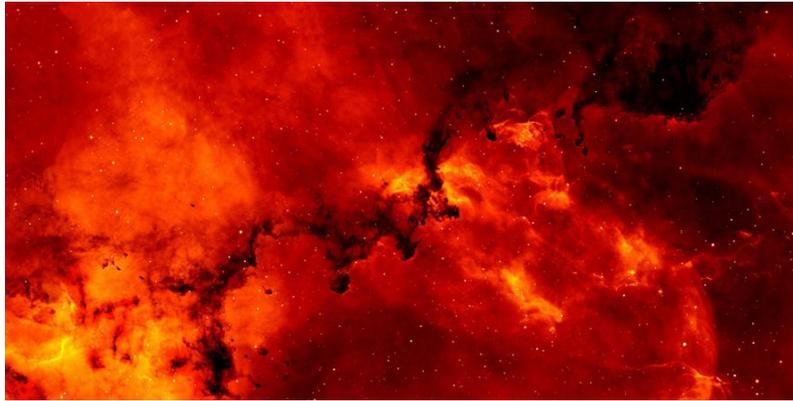


No Images? [Click here](#)

# Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation

*From the Center for Action and Contemplation*



*Week Thirty-five*

Judaism

## **A Gracious God**

Monday, August 27, 2018

For most of human history God was not viewed as having a likeable, much less lovable, character. That's why every "theophany" in the Bible (an event where God manifests in visible reality) begins with the same words. Whenever an angel or God breaks into human life, the first words are invariably, "Do not be afraid." We need to be reassured, not only that God is loving, but that we too—made in the image and likeness of God—are good and relational beings.

Historically, archaic religion worldwide attempted to assure people that nothing new would happen. Most of us want our lives and history to be predictable and controllable, and the best way to

do that is to try to control and even manipulate the gods. Most religions told humans what spiritual buttons to push to keep reality and God predictable. Humanity did not, by and large, expect *love* from God before the biblical revelation.

In many ancient religions, God was felt to be “controllable” through human sacrifice (archaeologists find evidence of this on most continents). In Abraham’s time and context, the sacrificial instinct was, sadly, transferred to goats, sheep, and bullocks when animals, rather than humans, were sacrificed to please this fearsome God.

The prophets of Israel were in touch with a more loving God. Here is how God described God’s self to Moses:

YHWH, YHWH, a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness, and abounding in faithfulness. For the thousandth generation, YHWH maintains kindness, forgiving all your faults, transgressions, and sins. (Exodus 34:6-7)

In this marvelous early affirmation, we have, in the words of Walter Brueggemann, “a formulation so studied that it may be reckoned to be something of a classic, normative statement to which Israel regularly returned, meriting the label ‘credo.’” [1] In it are found five generous and glorious adjectives that describe the heart and soul of Jewish belief. Somehow, against all odds and neighbors, the children of Israel were able to experience a God who was merciful (in Hebrew, *rhm*), compassionate/gracious (*hnn*), steadfast in love (*hsd*), tenaciously faithful (*emeth*) and forgiving (*ns*). This is the dynamic center of their entire belief system, as it should be

ours and, like all spiritual mystery, seems to be endlessly generative and fruitful, culminating in the full-blown—and literally unthinkable—concept of grace.

We first see the idea of grace in the Hebrew Scriptures through the concept of election or chosenness. This is eventually called “covenant love” because it finally becomes a mutual giving and receiving. This love is always initiated from YHWH’s side toward the people of Israel, and they gradually learn to trust it and respond in kind. The Bible shows a relentless movement toward intimacy and divine union between Creator and creatures. For this to happen, there needs to be some degree of compatibility, likeness, or even “sameness” between the two parties. In other words, there has to be a little bit of God in us that wants to find Itself.

### **Gateway to Presence:**

*If you want to go deeper with today’s meditation, take note of what word or phrase stands out to you. Come back to that word or phrase throughout the day, being present to its impact and invitation.*

[1] Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Fortress: 1997), 216.

Adapted from Richard Rohr, *Things Hidden: Scripture as Spirituality* (Franciscan Media: 2007), 8-10, 163-164, 168-169.

Image credit: *Red and Orange Solar Flare* (Rosette Nebula [detail])

**Forward to a Friend** →

Forward this email to a friend or family member that may find it meaningful.

Was this email forwarded to you? Sign up for the daily, weekly, or monthly meditations.

**Sign Up** →

Thank you for being part of CAC's contemplative community. You are one of [294,604](#) readers worldwide (as of August 2018).

## **News from the CAC**

### **Registration extended!**

#### **[Immortal Diamond: A Study in Search of the True Self](#)**

September 5-November 14, 2018  
(Registration closes August 28.)

Join seekers from around the world in an online exploration of Richard Rohr's book *Immortal Diamond*. Rediscover your forgotten self that can never be destroyed but can be transformed to live in eternal love.

#### **[The Franciscan Way: Beyond the Bird Bath](#)**

September 12-October 31, 2018  
(Registration closes September 4.)

This online course offers a unique window into Franciscan thought and practice with Richard Rohr. Step outside comfortable ideas and habits. Move into new experiences with God, self, and others.

### **CONSPIRE 2018 is this weekend!**

There's still time to register for the webcast with Richard Rohr, Barbara Holmes, Brian McLaren, Barbara Brown Taylor, and Mirabai Starr. Watch live, August 31-September 2, 2018, or watch the replay. Participate online with over 2,500 people around the world. Receive access to the edited, downloadable videos to revisit and share the experience in your church or faith group.

Learn more at [cac.org/conspire2018](http://cac.org/conspire2018).

## **"Image and Likeness"**

### **2018 Daily Meditations Theme**

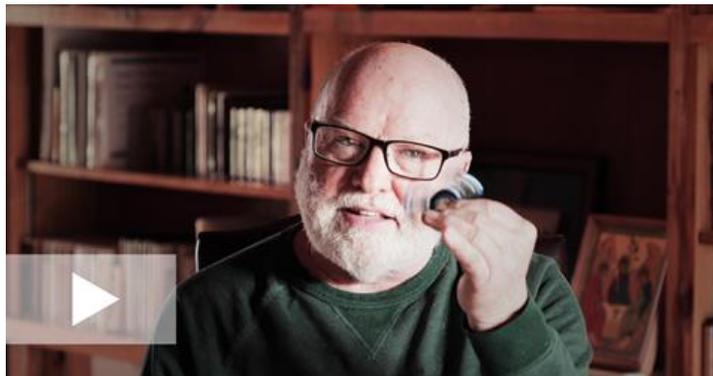
*God said, "Let us make humans in our image, according to our likeness." —Genesis 1:26*

Richard Rohr explores places in which God's presence has often been ignored or assumed absent. God's "image" is our inherent identity in and union with God, an eternal essence that cannot be destroyed. "Likeness" is our personal embodiment of that inner divine image that we have the freedom to develop—or not—throughout our lives. Though we differ in likeness, the *imago Dei* persists and shines through all created things.

Over the course of this year's Daily Meditations, discover opportunities to incarnate love in your unique context by unveiling the Image and Likeness of God in all that you see and do.

Each week builds on previous topics, but you can join at any time! Click the video to learn more about the

theme and to find meditations you may have missed.



We hope that reading these messages is a contemplative, spiritual practice for you. [Learn about contemplative prayer and other forms of meditation.](#) For frequently asked questions—such as what versions of the Bible Father Richard recommends or how to ensure you receive every meditation—please see our email [FAQ](#).



Feel free to share meditations on social media. Go to CAC's [Facebook page](#) or [Twitter feed](#) and find today's post. Or use the "Forward" button above to send via email.

Richard Rohr's Daily Meditations are made possible through the generosity of CAC's donors. [Please consider making a tax-deductible donation.](#)

If you would like to change how often you receive emails from CAC, [click here](#). If you would like to change your email address, [click here](#). Visit our [Email Subscription FAQ page](#) for more information. [Submit an inquiry here](#) for additional assistance.

**Inspiration for this week's banner image:** *God reveals the essence of divinity to Moses: ehyeh asher ehyeh, most often*

*translated as I AM what I AM. A more accurate Hebrew translation would be “I will be whatever I will be.” In either case, the Hasidic understanding of the text is the same: God is all that is. God is all that is happening at every moment. God is I AM—not a being or even a supreme being, but Being itself. . . . [Each of us is] a keeper of the I AM; just as a wave is a “keeper of” the ocean in its particular place and time, so are you a keeper of God in your particular place and time. To realize this about yourself is to realize it about all beings. — Rabbi Rami Shapiro*



© 2018 | Center for Action and Contemplation  
1823 Five Points Road SW  
Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA

Like

Tweet

Forward

[Unsubscribe](#)