

May 19, 2011

“Spiritually Speaking”, *Crescenta Valley Weekly*, Posted by Robin Goldsworthy
<http://www.crescentavalleyweekly.com/religion/05/19/2011/spiritually-speaking-3/>

QUESTION:

What can I do about educating a neighbor on the welfare of her pet? Her little 2-year-old Corgi has never been trained, is left out in all kinds of extreme weather from freezing cold to pouring rains until the neighbor thinks she's been out long enough to "do her job," which sometimes is for hours, or all day if she so chooses.

Because she leaves food and water and has a travel carrier out the Humane Society won't get involved. The little dog has no clue what that carrier is for and has never used it [and] usually spills her water so goes without for hours at a time. In my opinion, it's animal abuse, pure and simple.

- Animal Lover in Glendale

ANSWER:

Dear Glendale Animal Lover,

Pets are not just our property. They are fellow creatures and companions on this earth. As such, they deserve our guardianship and compassion, not just minimal physical care. That responsibility means that we need to provide for them as though they were members of our family – and some of them do become that close to us.

You don't say whether you have had any conversations with your neighbor about her dog. It may just be that she doesn't really understand her obligation as an owner/companion. I hope that you can convince her in a sensitive way that what she is treating her dog is not all right. If she is a member of a local congregation, you might even be able to get some support for your efforts from her minister, rabbi or imam.

If your words or actions don't help, perhaps you could give her a booklet from a local vet or pet store about pet owner responsibilities. Her dog needs love and training, not neglect.

If that fails, you could call the ASPCA or PETA for advice or intervention. As a minister and animal lover, my heart goes out to this poor dog and to you. I hope that you will be able to find a solution to this difficult issue.

Blessings,



Rev. Dr. Betty Stapleford
Unitarian Universalist Church of the Verdugo Hills
La Crescenta

Spiritually Speaking answers personal questions and concerns with a spiritual perspective. Local religious leaders that will take part in the discussion include Bryan Griem of Montrose Community Church; Jon Karn of Light on the Corner Church; Kimberlie Zakarian of Holy House Ministries; Skip Lindeman of La Cañada Congregational United Church of Christ; Rabbi Simcha Backman of Chabad of Glendale; Levent Akbarut of Islamic Congregation of La Cañada Flintridge; Betty Stapleford of Unitarian Universalist; Paige Eaves CV United Methodist Church; Bryan Jones of St. Luke's of the Mountains Episcopal Church; Steven Van Meter and Beverly Craig of La Crescenta Center for Spiritual Living and Sharon Weisman, self-described atheist/agnostic/secular humanist/free thinker. We welcome your questions and comments. Email us at spiritual@cvweekly.com. Responses are offered from the perspectives of individual clergy members, which may or may not be in agreement with other respondents of Spiritually Speaking nor the editor and staff of the Crescenta Valley Weekly.