

The Talks of Eknath Easwaran: Tape 20

Study Guide for *The Gita's Divine Vision*

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The Source of Inner Peace

Introduction

On this tape you will find two talks depicting the radiant vision of life presented in the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Easwaran's most cherished scripture. Commenting on many of his favorite verses, drawn mainly from the tenth chapter of the Gita, Sri Easwaran conveys with great devotion and artistry his vision of the universe as an expression of God's love.

For Sri Easwaran, this experience of union is inseparable from inner peace, and in this talk he gives very practical advice for gradually establishing that peace in our mind and heart. The more peaceful we become, the more we are able to perceive the unity and beauty of the world around us until, eventually, the barriers fall and we ourselves become instruments of God's love in the world.

Practical Exercise

In this exercise we will explore the connection between the way we see the world and our efforts to establish a more peaceful state of mind.

In this talk, Sri Easwaran says that meditation can bring us the capacity to have a mind so filled with peace that no discord with other people can upset us: "You always know that this is the home in which all of us live as children of God." One way to start cultivating this most difficult capacity is to learn to direct our attention to what is best in others, thus reducing our agitation and also encouraging them to rise to their highest potential.

This week, try to improve one of your relationships that is problematic, where you have felt some discord or unease. (Please note: use your common sense and discrimination in this exercise. It's best to start with a situation where the difficulties are relatively small, even trivial.) Make a special effort to ignore the problem, or that aspect of the other person's behavior which has upset you. Instead, focus all your attention on the positive. You may want to write out some good qualities of the other person, or list some of the things he or she has done for you in the past.

This exercise is not meant to supplant your efforts to correct a negative or harmful situation. Rather, it is one strategy which can yield great results by revealing positive aspects of the situation which you may have overlooked or undervalued. This exercise is a way of reminding yourself of what Sri Easwaran calls the "original goodness" which dwells in everyone's heart.

Recommended Reading

The Bhagavad Gita for Daily Living, Chapter 10. Commentaries on verses 1-9.

Suggested Passages for Meditation

St. Catherine of Genoa, "A Sea of Peace" in *God Makes the Rivers to Flow*.

Sri Sarada Devi, "The Whole World Is Your Own" in *God Makes the Rivers to Flow*.

The Source of Inner Peace

September 12, 1987

During this weekend, all over India, people will be celebrating the birthday of Sri Krishna, who lived about three thousand years ago in a very beautiful village called Vrindavan, about a hundred miles south of Delhi. But it is always necessary to remember that there are two aspects of the Lord of Love, whether he is known as Sri Krishna or the Christ. There is the historical aspect, of Jesus having lived about two thousand years ago, or the Buddha, about twenty-five hundred years ago, and Sri Krishna, about three thousand years ago. But apart from this historical aspect there is the eternal Lord of Love, who is ever present in the hearts of all. A great German mystic, [Angelus Silesius](#), will say, It's good that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, but he should be born in your hearts, which is the real Christmas.

The Hindu and Buddhist sages especially declare that the long travail of evolution has this shining goal in view. Nobody is going to be lost. It's a very comforting, very consoling reminder that all of us are children of God. However much we may dilly-dally on the way, pursuing what appears to satisfy us, but what will leave us even hungrier than before – in spite of all this dalliance, the very thrust of life, the very drive behind life will take us home.

Now, here the [Gita](#) and other great scriptures ask the question: Why do you want to postpone this as long as possible? Why don't you take this evolution in your own hands, instead of being beaten about by life? Because both the Hindu and the Buddhist sages say, That is the purpose of pain; that's the purpose of suffering – to bring us back to the [strait and narrow path](#), as Jesus puts it, which will lead us into the kingdom of heaven. I need quote no higher authority than Jesus, who says very simply – with deceptive simplicity – the kingdom of heaven is within. Anybody, by virtue of being a human being, can enter this kingdom. It means living in profound peace inside.

The Gita will say, [ashantasya kutah sukham?](#) (2:16) You can make all the money you want, enjoy all the pleasures you want, achieve all the fame you want, if your mind is not full of peace, how will you find – *ashantasya kutah sukham?* – how will you find health? How will you find happiness, leave aside heaven? This is why I try to present the spiritual life everywhere as living at its best. Physically... according to the chronicles, Sri Krishna is said to have lived between one hundred and twenty and one hundred and thirty years, which to me is an indication that this is the maximum that we should all aim at. In the Hindu tradition, the sixtieth birthday is an event of great joy (I didn't understand it for a long time) because it is halfway.

When I say “living at its best,” it means with all your faculties enriched: judgment, decision-making, capacity for creative action, the capacity to face challenges that are intimidating without any fear of inadequacy or despondency. Emotionally, to have a mind so full of [shanti](#) (after which this hall is named) that even though people may attack you or slander you or even hinder you, events may all be taking place unfavorably around you, you don't lose your sense of peace. You know it's a friendly world. You always feel at home in the world. You may be in another country,

among other peoples. You always know that this is the home in which all of us live as children of God.

The spiritual life is based on training the mind. That is what, to use your common phrase, all religion is about. Training the mind, that's what all living is about. It is a subject that is almost unknown in our modern civilization. Most of the problems that I see – domestic, educational, medical, political, even economic – can be traced to the utter ignorance in which all of us live, because there is no place where we can learn to train the mind, there is nobody who believes that the mind can be trained, and according to recent advances, there isn't anything like the mind. Everything is physical, biochemical.

That is where the immortal message of ancient India to the whole world is, put in the words of the Buddha, "There is nothing so disobedient as an untrained mind." There's nothing so unhealthy, so unhappy, so ugly as an untrained mind. And there is nothing, the Buddha would say, so healthy as a trained mind, so happy as a trained mind, so beautiful as a trained mind.

Let me also add, the practice of meditation and the training of the mind – there is nothing more difficult on earth. There is nothing more dangerous on earth. We do not know that there is a world within. Even though we all know we are subject to the storms and the hurricanes and the typhoons that blow outside, there are those that blow inside too. Just as wind power can be harnessed, the wind of anger can be harnessed, as Gandhi did. The wind of greed can be harnessed, as Francis did. It is this training of the mind that enables everybody to discover the immense wealth all of us have, and to claim it as our own, not for our own private use, but for the benefit of everybody.

So meditation can be practiced for our whole life, by all those who have determination, dedication, drive, daring. We have millions of young people in this country who are capable of harnessing all these. That is why I feel so happy now that we are drawing more and more young people, reaching more and more young people, and I hope, with the help of you all, to reach millions of young people, to teach them how to train their mind, to treat their life as a trust. It is when we train the mind that we discover that all of us are trustees, trustees not only of our natural resources, trustees for our own talent, for our own time, for our own training.

This is why, let me repeat it over and over again, you can practice meditation in your home. You don't have to go to India. In fact very few people meditate in India. You can be married. You can be single. You can hold a job, working on a campus or at a clinic – any job that is useful for life. You can wear a three-piece suit. You can wear designer jeans. There is no need to shave your head. You can grow a beard. All this has got nothing to do with the spiritual life. That is why I repeat over and over again, it's training of the mind. Anybody who has trained the mind completely is aware of God. The whole message of the Gita is this.

[*Aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravartate iti matva bhajante mam budha bhavasamanvitah.*](#) Sri Krishna is saying, *aham sarvasya prabhavo.* [*Aham*](#), I. I am the source of all beings, of all creatures. This is not something that you have to accept on hearsay. This is what

you discover when your mind is still, when your self-will is extinguished. When you become aware of God, this is what you discover.

[Aham sarvasya prabhava](#). Not only human beings – animals and birds. That is the basis of vegetarianism. They are all my brethren, as you can see from my relationships with all creatures. That is the kinship that Francis proclaims when he says Brother Wolf, Sister Sparrow. Not only that, my family includes seas and mountains. The great French naval expert Cousteau says a dead sea means a dead earth. There is a very vital connection between the earth and the sea. Sri Krishna will say in the Gita, [sarasam asmi sagarah](#). When I go for my walk on the beach, I don't look at something that has been created by the Lord. The sea is an expression of the Lord's love, because without that it is not possible to live. *Sarasam asmi sagarah*.

[Stavaranam himalaya](#). Life needs the sea, needs the mountains. [Srotasam asmi jahnavi](#) – needs the rivers, represented by Ganges. It is this awareness that is really awareness of God. You realize that you are not a private little creature who can follow your own private satisfactions, if necessary at the expense of others, that you represent the whole family in yourself. Everything you do, you say, you think, has to contribute to life.

[Aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravartate](#). All the power that you see being used in the world, Sri Krishna says, is my power. Physiology teaches a great deal about the body, but it is the great spiritual teachers like Sri Krishna or the Buddha or the Christ who say the power by which I move my hand is the Lord's. That's what you realize in the depths of your consciousness, when meditation reaches its tremendous climax. I didn't know that this power was the Lord's. Once I realized that even the movement of my arm is the power of the Lord, I realized it is meant not to strike at others, but to help others, to support others, to wipe the tears of others away. All this comes with this realization.

[Aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravartate. Iti matva](#): Those who have discovered this *iti* thus, *matva* those who have understood this, discovered this, realized this, *bhajante mam*, they always are aware of me. They always see me in everyone.

[Bhajante mam budha](#): That's where the [Buddha](#) gets his name. *Bhavasamanvitah*: such people are awake. In the tremendous climax of meditation, this is what you really understand, that you have been asleep, you have been dreaming, just as I, who was functioning so well at a great university in India, I couldn't believe, when this happened to me, that I had been sleeping and dreaming, unaware of the tremendous wealth that is within me because the source of the Lord is in all of us.

[Bhajante mam budha bhavasamanvitah](#): What is the proof of this realization? You don't have to tell anybody you have realized God. You don't have to announce over television that you are looking at a person who has realized God. [Maccitta](#): That person's mind will always rest in me, will always be aware of the indivisible unity of life. [Madgataprana](#): So his vitality will be immense, his energy will be endless, his creativity astonishing. Look at Gandhi. *Maccitta madgataprana*: That's the proof – all used for the benefit of all, never for one's private profit. The day you start using it, the bank is closed. You will not get access to those deepest resources.

[Maccitta madgataprana bodhayantah parasparam](#). And then comes the great line, [kathayantasca mam nityam](#): Who always talk about me, who always describe my love, not only in words, but in their own personal life. That is the proof of the person who is aware of God, not talking only in words, but talking through life. When Gandhi was asked, on his day of silence, What's your message? he wrote, "My life is my message."

[Kathayantasca mam nityam tusyanti ca ramanti ca](#): This is why I say, I haven't turned my back on all the innocent joys of life. I like the theater. I think it can play a useful part in educating young people. You may remember last Thursday, I went to the Berkeley Repertory Theater. It's part of my [sadhana](#). It's not just a trip to the theater. I went with Christine and a party of friends to Monterey Market, which to me is not that produce place. What I see is the art gallery of my beloved boss. Every fruit, every vegetable – if you would only look through my eyes – they're all works of art, meant to strengthen our body, to lengthen our life, which is the message of [Laurel's Kitchen](#), which is not just a nutritional message. It is a message of love: don't do anything at the expense of your body. Do everything to strengthen your body, because that is the most valuable instrument of service that we have.

That's why I keep repeating, through the blessing of my [Beloved Boss](#), I want to live until I am one hundred and twenty. Modern health sciences are beginning slowly to see there is no reason why we should not live like that. It's not enough if we eat good food, which is necessary, have regular exercise, which is necessary, but we should be free from the storms of the mind, which consume a lot of vitality. That's why not all the right eating and right exercise habits will enable one to live to one's full span of life, unless the mind is trained, the mind is full of peace, the heart is full of love.

[Tusyanti](#): That's a very special Sanskrit word. The God-conscious person will always be in a deep state of joy inwardly. Not the excited person. The excited person is just asking for trouble. When the mind goes up, it has to go down, which is what depression is. Here, there is a permanent source of joy, a perennial source of love, which will be at play not only during the day, but even at night, even in sleep. I call out, when I am fast asleep, the name of Krishna so many times. That's what this kind of overwhelming love brings to the human being: health, joy, long life, creativity, great personal relationships, and a feeling of being at home, whatever circumstances may bring. You can ask the friends who were with me, nobody enjoyed that play better than I did. Everywhere you will be at your best.

Now let me read the testimony of a great woman mystic from Europe. "The state of this soul is then a feeling of such utter peace . . ." this is from [St. Catherine of Genoa](#), who lived in the fifteenth century. She is describing the state that all of us can reach. "The state of this soul is then a feeling of such utter peace and tranquility that..." look at the remarkable observation – not just the soul, not just even the mind, even the heart and entrails, "within and without, it seems to be plunged in a sea of deepest peace, from which it will never come out."

You can say what you like, you can do what you like, governments can threaten, people can desert, nothing will disturb that peace. That's why, read [Gandhi the Man](#), who said, It is the timid

who want support of numbers. The valiant, God-aware person fights alone against any odds that he may have to face.

“ . . . it seems to be plunged in a sea of deepest peace, from which it'll never come out, no matter what may happen to it in life.” That is why we should all aim at this peace, called beautifully *shanti* in Sanskrit, which protects the immune system, protects the vital organs, brings a beauty into your life that shows in everything you do, everything you say, everything you feel.

“It stays immovable.” The peace brought by money or applause or fame, you know, it comes and goes. “It stays immovable, imperturbable” -- that's the test -- “impassable” -- not “impossible,” which I would also add.

“ . . . in body and in spirit, within and without. It has no other feeling but one of sweetest peace.” Patanjali, the great teacher of meditation in ancient India, says when you live with such a person, it'll bring peace to you. When you love such a person, it'll bring peace to you. That's how you can look at the life of Jesus or of the Buddha or of Francis, or of Mahatma Gandhi.

“ . . . within and without. It has no other feeling but one of sweetest peace.” Now just listen to these words. “It is so filled with peace,” St. Catherine of Genoa says, “that if you were to squeeze the flesh,” or the nails or the bones, “only peace would issue from them.” This peace enriches all the physiological systems. That is why I hope, with the help of many, many people, to present this source of peace to all those who have the determination and the daring to use their life as a trust for the benefit of all.

The last words of the verse I quoted from the Gita are *tusyanti ca ramanti ca*. The real mark of a good spiritual aspirant is that he is always cheerful; she is always of good cheer. The company of spiritual aspirants – I like to quote the words of Jesus: Where two or three are really gathered in my name, aware of me, I am present there. Gandhi is present not where there is a statue to him, but when we practice the teachings of Gandhi, he is present here. Francis is present not where a statue has been put up to him. We meditate on his prayer – that is the real meaning of practicing the presence of God.

To conclude with a great quotation from Mahatma Gandhi as to what the Gita means, which is exactly what it means to me. “The Gita has been a mother to me . . .” Just as a mother nourishes her baby with milk, the Gita can nourish us with the milk of love, of health, of joy, of wisdom. “The Gita has been a mother to me ever since I first became acquainted with it in 1869. I turn to it for guidance in every difficulty . . .” Gandhi is a man who never exaggerates, never uses a word out of place. “I turn to the Gita in every difficulty and the desired guidance has been always forthcoming.” You have to understand the Gita not intellectually but experientially, by practicing it on the basis of meditation. “ . . . And the desired guidance has been always forthcoming.

“But you must approach the Gita in all reverence . . .” In fact in the Gita Sri Krishna will caution me, people like me, don't interpret the Gita where there is no respect for it, where there is no desire to practice its teachings. You can see, all of us teachers have a grave responsibility. “But you must approach the Gita in all reverence if you would benefit by her ministrations. One who rests his head on her loving lap” the loving lap of the Gita, “never experiences disappointments.”

If I may say so, the word “disappointment” has been erased from my dictionary. As many of my friends can testify, I have lost the capacity to be disappointed. “One who rests his head on her peace-loving lap enjoys bliss in perfection.” Which permeates the body, the nervous system, the mind, the intellect.

“This spiritual mother gives her devotee fresh knowledge every day.” Every day when I go deep in meditation, I come out with more pearls, which everybody can have if they will dive deep. As [Sri Ramakrishna](#) says, Dive deep, O mind, dive deep in the sea of pearls where you can bring up pearls to help the whole world. “This spiritual mother gives her devotee fresh knowledge, fresh hope, and fresh power every moment of his life.”

Remembering God Everywhere

Introduction

In this talk, Sri Easwaran is again commenting on verses from the eighth and tenth chapters of the Bhagavad Gita, with special emphasis on how we can use the mantram to purify our thinking process and fit ourselves for the divine vision described by the Gita.

He is speaking on New Year's Eve in 1988, and uses the occasion to exhort his students to their fullest effort during the coming year to deepen their meditation and make a contribution to establishing peace and harmony in the world.

He closes the talk with a beautiful passage by the Franciscan priest Fra Giovanni Gioconda (c.1445 – 1525). It is a blessing which eloquently restates the promise of the Gita: Behind the apparent diversity and discord of the world, we can become aware of a single divine force of love and wisdom, with which we can unite ourselves through the practice of spiritual disciplines.

Practical Exercise

Our topic for this exercise is again the search for original goodness. But this time we will direct our attention not to others but to ourselves. In this talk, Sri Easwaran speaks of the mantram as a very effective method for remembering that there is a divine spark that dwells within all creatures. One of the situations in which it is sometimes difficult to remember that spark is when we feel regret or frustration about a negative quality in ourselves.

Take five minutes (no more than that!) to reflect and choose a trait about yourself – a habit or tendency – that you would like to change for the better. Reflect on what would be the corresponding positive quality. For instance, if you've chosen a tendency to be quick to anger, the corresponding positive would be patience. If you've chosen a tendency to be stubborn and self-willed, the corresponding positive would be yielding and flexible. Once you've chosen a positive quality, write it at the top of a page and write the mantram for five minutes.

In Sri Easwaran's vision of original goodness, that positive quality is already within you, though it may be partially obscured. During the coming week, try as much as you can to display that positive quality in every way. Once a day, try to take a few minutes to write the mantram as a way of redirecting your attention to this positive quality in yourself.

It is important to follow these directions carefully, and not to spend more than five minutes in identifying a trait you wish to change in yourself. After that, devote all your attention and willpower to concentrating on the corresponding positive quality.

Recommended Reading

The Bhagavad Gita for Daily Living, Chapter 10. Commentaries on verses 10-22.

Suggested Passage for Meditation

The Bhagavad Gita, “The Eternal Godhead” from *God Makes the Rivers to Flow*.

Remembering God Everywhere

Dec. 31, 1988

It is with a very joyful heart that we bring the old year to a close and usher in the New Year, in which we can all play a part, however small we may be and however insignificant our position may be, in bringing in what Gandhiji calls *Ramarajya*, the rule of Rama, the rule of joy, expressing the indivisible unity of life.

I am continuing with many of the verses that I use in my own meditation in the hope that they will inspire all of you to redouble your efforts in [sadhana](#), to deepen your meditation, to get established in the use of the mantram and to work harmoniously so that our children may reap the benefits of our own selfless service.

[Yo mam ajam anadim ca vetti lokamahesvaram asammudhah sa martyesu sarvapapaih pramucyate](#). *Yah*, whoever, *mam*, the Lord of Love, whom I call Krishna, saying: Who realizes me – *mam*, *yo mam ajam*, as unborn, *anadim*, without beginning, *vetti lokamahesvaram*, whoever recognizes me, realizes me as the Supreme Lord who is present everywhere. One of the names of Krishna is Vasudeva and just as Rama is called [Dasharathi](#), Krishna is called Vasudeva, son of Vasudeva. Another interpretation, that I very much like, is: *vasu* means to dwell. He who dwells everywhere, dwells in every heart, in every creature and not only that, dwells in the air and the water, the forests and the topsoil. Whoever realizes me like that will naturally and continuously live in such a manner that he will have respect for all people, for all countries, for all creatures and for all the environment. You see, that is the test.

While we are reading about all kinds of people claiming to be lovers of God, the Gita gives us this very practical test. That is where I am going to give some practical suggestions, which we can all implement in the year to come.

[Maccitta madgataprana bodhayantah parasparam kathayantasca mam nityam tusyanti ca ramanti ca](#). It is almost a description of our life. *Maccitta*: even though I work at many tasks, my mind is always centered in Krishna. It doesn't matter what I am doing, where I am walking, whether I am awake or asleep, my center is always in Krishna. So he says *maccitta*, when your mind is always in Krishna, in greeting everybody with respect, in treating all creatures with affection, in respecting the purity of the environment, *madgataprana*, his vital energy is connected with mine, so there will be a continuous flow of energy.

One of the great gifts that [Gandhiji](#) gave all of us is how every one of us, by seeking the Lord of Love, can have a continuous flow of energy. Nobody is more surprised than I am. See, I go to sleep at midnight and early morning I am awake for meditation. And after meditation, I am there with Christine on the beach walking fast. Then, coming back, we have a [satsang](#) and a solid breakfast; and seeing people, answering letters, writing page after page and doing hard study of subjects that I was not trained in. For all this, *madgataprana*. And if you want continuing energy, deepen your meditation. If you want continuing vitality, that will not forsake you even in the evening of your life, continue to deepen your meditation and use the mantram. And use all your leisure, your energy to do this work that is benefiting a larger and larger number of people all over the country.

So, [maccitta madgataprana bodhayantah parasparam](#). That's a beautiful phrase. Wake each other up. You know, when you live in a dorm – you remember how you would go and help other people to wake up. Try to do the same and the best way of waking up people is the way that my grandmother taught me. I don't try to even think of what anybody has done to me. I am always interested in seeing what I can do for people, which makes you forget whatever harm has been done to you, whatever ill will has been shown to you because your attitude now is turned outwards, to give more than you can, to do more than you can to yourself and to others. You see, that is the way to wake up people. When you burst out in anger against me and I remain patient and forgiving, but not withdrawing or retiring, I am slowly waking you up. We are all trying to do this, even the children.

I am very pleased to say that when I went to see a movie for the sake of the young people – the kind of movie that I don't pretend to understand at all – some song was being sung. I couldn't follow the words at all, so I asked one of the boys, "What do those words mean?" He kept quiet and I said, "Don't you understand?" He said, "Oh, yes. We understand them, but we don't want you to understand them." See, protecting me against some of the vagaries of American colloquialism. I appreciated it so much. I felt so safe under their umbrella.

[Maccitta madgataprana bodhayantah parasparam](#). [Kathayantasca mam](#). Whenever I come and tell you something about the seagulls or the sea lions or about the deer or about [Brinda or about Ganesha or MacDuff or Luther](#), I am not narrating stories about animals, nor am I narrating stories about birds. *Kathayantas ca mam*, Krishna says. He is talking about me. That is why you come to have great affection for all creatures. When we are in a hurry to go to the beach, Ganesha hangs out there. Christine sometimes says, "When we come back, we can give him . . ." No, you see, I don't want to impair his faith in me. I don't want to injure his belief in me, so I always make sure that he gets his chance. But I am also careful not to give a second one.

Tusyanti ca ramanti ca. As a result, the man or woman who has realized God, they will always be *tushta*, complete. If you are complete, no media can manipulate you. If you are complete – [purna](#), *tushta* – nobody can manipulate you. No circumstances can manipulate you. That is the state all of us should aim at.

I must also point out to you from my observation of Gandhiji – he is a marvelous combination of toughness and tenderness. He will be very, very tender, but all of a sudden he will become tough. This combination of toughness and tenderness is the very breath of romance, you see.

Tusyanti. If you ask me, “How do we become like that?” *smaranti*. *Smr/smara* means to remember. Keep repeating the mantram as persistently and as passionately as I have done. When people come to me with problems, I don’t talk to them nor do I let them talk to me. I am not interested in hearing about problems. All I say is, You keep repeating the mantram when you have doubts, when you have difficulties, when you feel depressed, just keep repeating your mantram, go for a walk and you will find that has the final answer for everything.

The next verse is very, very comforting and very, very reassuring. Everybody can follow it.

[*Ananyacetah satatam yo mam smarati nityasah tasyaham sulabhah partha nityayuktasya yoginah.*](#) When I start meditating on that, I go deeper and deeper and deeper and soon I don’t hear the dogs. I don’t hear the pump. I don’t hear the planes. I don’t hear the cars. That’s what passionate concentration does. It can happen to everybody. You have to practice it all the time.

Sri Krishna doesn’t say Indians or Hindus or Europeans or black people. He just says, *ananyacetah*: no other target, no other objective, no other goal. See, I don’t have any other goal. I don’t have any other objective. I don’t have any other target. That’s the secret.

[*Ananyacetah mam satatam.*](#) In my sleep, I call Krishna a hundred times and I am not even aware. *Ananyacetah*. It has been a faithful constant repetition. While traveling, let the driver drive and let the others repeat their mantram. While on a plane, you can repeat your mantram for hours. While walking, you can repeat your mantram. I am for right talk, but we don’t have to gossip. And as Calvin Coolidge used to say, “If you don’t say something, nobody is going to ask you to repeat it.” I think it is a very valuable piece of advice.

[*Ananyacetah satatam yo mam smarati nityasah.*](#) You see, every secret is given there. *Mam smarati nityasah*. *Nityasah*, always. In the early days, it is not going to be very easy. The mind gets tired, the will gets tired, but you pick up. That’s the kind of spirit, that’s the kind of determination – Sri Krishna uses the words *tasya ‘ham sulabhah partha*. You really have to know Sanskrit to see the sweetness of Sri Krishna. For such a person, he says, *partha*, I am *sulabha*. *Labha* means to get. *Sulabha*, easy to get. He assures us. After all, repeating *Rama, Rama* doesn’t require any memorization. It doesn’t require any extraordinary understanding of language. You just keep repeating in your mind – when you are angry, when you are afraid, when you are depressed, when you don’t know what to do. Instead of thinking about it, this is all you have to do. Gandhiji will add, it will become the staff of life. When you are about to lose your balance, you can regain it. When you are afraid, you can lose your fear.

In the Gita, [*pavanah pavatam asmi, ramah sastrabhritam aham.*](#) Sri Krishna says, “Among purifiers, I am the wind.” See, after the rains – after a storm has come and gone – how beautiful it all is, how pure the air is. Sri Krishna says, “You just let my name blow through your mind and it

will sweep all the clouds away,” as I can certify to you. *Ramah sastrabhritam aham*. Sri Krishna says, “Among archers, I am Rama.”

In one of our greatest traditions in India it is called *Rama bana*, – the name of Rama is an arrow. You have to practice your archery. There are archery classes, archery courses, archery sites where people go and shoot at – what do they call it? Some creature’s eye. Here, you see, you keep the bow like this, put the arrow, and pull!

As a little boy, somebody brought us a catapult. You know what a catapult is? Slingshot. Do you all follow? Now, we never knew what it was and one of my great uncles said, “Let me see what we can do with this.” He read the instructions and he put a little rock and he tried to pull. We had to pounce upon him, you see. So, this is what you do with the Rama arrow. When your aim is precise, when you have developed the skill, when you have a great fear, you can shoot it down. When you have a great craving for smoking, for drinking, for drugging – even for overeating – please take it from me. You can shoot it straight and this approach will appeal very much to young people because it calls for a great deal of precision and a great deal of practice to be able to gain such marksmanship.

When I pass by [William Tell’s](#), I often think a spiritual aspirant has got a [samskara](#) on his head. You remember, William Tell had two arrows. When the samskara says, “For whom is the other arrow?” He says, “It’s for you.” You can learn to shoot at any fear, at any craving, at any overriding impulse through repeating the mantram.

[Sulabha partha nityayuktasya yoginah](#). And Sri Krishna adds, “such a man or woman” – it doesn’t matter in which country they live – “they are united with me. So, whatever they need, I give. Whatever they receive, they receive through my grace.” That’s why I don’t talk to anybody about their problems. Even when I get letters, it is the same story. Repeat your mantram, deepen your meditation and when your aim is good, shoot it down.

Now, this is in a lighter vein. See, when I go to these shopping centers, which provide me with a great deal of material, two of the places that I frequent are beauty care for the eyes and beauty care for the skin. Now, let me assure you. I am not against taking care of your skin. I take jolly good care of my skin. Don’t ever be under the impression that I am anti-skin. Not at all, I like everybody to have a nice skin. It is my submission that everybody can have a nice skin.

All that I plead for is to give the mind the same attention, which is equal opportunity, you see. You do everything that you can for your skin, please give your mind the same attention.

“The threats to skin are serious.” This is from a very valuable journal. “The diminishing ozone layer, the multitudes of pollutants, the swarm of free radicals, are all being flagged by cosmetic companies as hazards to the skin.” They are studying, sitting up and studying at night. “It figures that a new category of products would emerge to protect the skin from the environment. Consider the names of these products.” You may be familiar with some of them. “Skin Defender.” Just like the mantram: Mind Defender, *man-tra*. “Skin Defender. Detoxifying

Lotion.” I never heard of this. “Immune-H Defense Lotion – Ultraviolet. At the Biotherm counter are stacks of cards telling the customer how to city-proof the skin.” I am not against any of these within reason.

This is a statement by the vice president of the company. “We wanted to focus on an imperfect world.” Very realistic. The modern world does not promote skin care. The modern world is not pro-skin. “‘We are being assaulted,’ says Estee Lauder Vice President.” This is a prestigious company.

Now, let me repeat. I am not at all against the vice president or his sermon, but why can’t we do the same thing for our mind also. Defend the mind with the mantram. Detoxify the mind with meditation. All the harmful forces that are released in the modern world through anger and fear and greed, we can country-proof our skin. We can country-proof our mind. Wherever we live, we can so protect the mind that we will not be affected by other people’s animosities or other people’s criticism or other people’s opposition and we will be able to serve them and help them whatever their attitudes may be towards us.

Here is my old friend, [Plotinus](#). “He becomes established in quiet and solitary union. Not at all deviating from his own essence. Not revolving about himself, but becoming entirely stable.” [Sthitaprajna](#): “. . . becoming, as it were, stability itself.”

As the English poet says, “Truly, earth is crammed with heaven and every common bush afire with God.” That’s what I see everywhere.

“The last eight verses of Chapter 12,” which are favorites of mine, “contain the quintessence of bhakti,” of devotion, “and is the summing up of all the four discourses. Bhakti or devotion is no mere emotional rapture, but the very perfection of humility in the service of all that lives.” The greater your spiritual awareness, the humbler you become. “The extinction of all otherness and ill will; and contentment in willing surrender as an instrument of the Lord, the freedom from all depression and from all unquiet, a life in which the devotee feels at ease with the world and the world feels at ease with him.”

Now, a friend of mine has sent me a very suitable poem – I don’t know who the poet is [editor’s note: Fra Giovanni Giocondo] – with which I would like to conclude tonight’s talk, wishing all a very peaceful, a very joyful and a very deeper New Year.

I am your friend and my love for you goes deep. There is nothing I can give you which you have not got, but there is much, very much, that, while I cannot give it, you can take.

No heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in today. Therefore, take heaven!

No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present little instant. Therefore, take peace!

The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it, yet within our reach, is joy. There is radiance and glory in the darkness could we but see – and to see, we have only to look in. I beseech you to look in.

Life is so generous a giver but we, judging its gifts by the covering, cast them away as ugly or heavy or hard. Remove the covering and you will find beneath it a living splendor, woven of love by wisdom with power.

Welcome it, grasp it, and you touch the angel's hand that brings it to you. Everything we call a trial, a sorrow, or a duty, believe me, that angel's hand is there, the gift is there, and the wonder of an overshadowing presence. Our joys, too, be not content with them as joys. They, too, conceal diviner gifts.

Life is so full of meaning and purpose, so full of beauty – beneath its covering – that you will find earth but cloaks your heaven.

Courage, then, to claim it, that is all. But courage you have, and the knowledge that we are all pilgrims together, wending through unknown country, home.

And so, at this time, I greet you. Not quite as the world sends greetings, but with profound esteem and with the prayer that for you now and forever, the day breaks, and the shadows flee away.

Weekly Lesson Plan

Lesson One

In this month's lessons we will explore the connection between the way we see the world and our state of mind. In this talk, Sri Easwaran says that meditation can help us have a mind so filled with peace that no discord with other people can upset us: "You always know that this is the home in which all of us live as children of God." One way to start cultivating this capacity is to direct our attention to what is best in others, thus reducing our agitation while at the same time encouraging them to rise to their highest potential.

In answering these questions, please keep your focus on the practice of the Eight Point Program and don't let your reflections or discussion get distracted by the details of situations you are personally involved in.

Reflect on these questions: Have you noticed the mind's tendency to dwell on the negative aspects of a situation or person? Why do you think this happens? How have you used the Eight Points, and especially the Mantram, Slowing Down, and One-Pointed Attention, to redirect your attention to what is best in others? Which one of the points might you practice more intensely this week (and in what way?) to try to improve your ability to see the best in others?

When it's time for inspiration, watch the first talk on this tape, *The Source of Inner Peace*, which is 33 minutes long. If you are not using the videotapes, please start reading from Chapter 10 of *The Bhagavad Gita for Daily Living*, Volume Two. Conclude with thirty minutes of meditation.

Lesson Two

This week we are continuing to explore the connection between how we see life and the degree of peace we feel within ourselves. Last week we reflected on the mind's tendency to dwell on negative things, and we gave thought to ways in which we can dwell on the positive. This week we'll look at the effect of these different modes of seeing life.

Questions for Reflection

- a.) Consider this proposition: When we have a negative attitude we're uncomfortable about ourselves; when we have a positive attitude, we are peaceful, serene, comfortable. Please discuss -- does this match your experience?
- b.) Often when we fall into a negative state of mind, we are unaware that it's happened. But maybe we can develop our own personal "negativity-alert-system."

*What are some of your personal symptoms of being in a negative frame of mind? (examples -- irritability, making critical remarks about others, dwelling on bad stuff happening in current events, whining, being sarcastic.)

*When you notice these symptoms in yourself, what Eight Point Program strategies can you use to change to a more positive outlook?

When it's time for inspiration, please read from Chapter 10 of *The Bhagavad Gita for Daily Living*, Volume Two. Conclude with 30 minutes of meditation.

Lesson Three

For the past two weeks we've considered ways to see the original goodness in others. This week and next we'll concentrate on seeing it in ourselves.

In this week's video talk, Sri Easwaran speaks of the mantram as an effective method for remembering that God, the Divine Spirit, dwells within all creatures. One of the times when that is most difficult to remember is when we feel regret or frustration about a negative quality in ourselves.

Take five minutes (no more than that!) to reflect and choose a character trait about yourself – a habit or tendency – that you would like to change for the better. Reflect on what would be the corresponding positive quality. For instance, if you've chosen a tendency to be quick to anger, the corresponding positive might be patience. If you've chosen a tendency to be stubborn and self-willed, the corresponding positive might be relaxed and flexible. Once you've chosen a positive quality, write it at the top of a page and write the mantram for five minutes. (*It is important to follow these directions carefully, and not to spend more than five minutes in identifying a trait you wish to change in yourself. After that, devote all your attention and will power to concentrating on the corresponding positive quality.*)

Reflection: From Sri Easwaran's point of view (from the perspective of original goodness), the positive quality you've chosen is already within you, though it may now be partially obscured. During the coming week, how might you practice the Eight Points more fully, to display the positive quality you've chosen at every opportunity?

When it's time for inspiration, please watch the second of the two talks on this tape, *Remembering God Everywhere*, which is 32 minutes long. If you're not using the videos, please continue to read Chapter 10 of *The Bhagavad Gita for Daily Living*. Conclude with 30 minutes of meditation.

Lesson Four

This week we complete our lessons on the connection between inner peace and seeing the best in others and ourselves.

At the conclusion of last week's videotaped talk, Sri Easwaran compared the mantram to skin lotions, saying that we should be as assiduous in protecting our mind from negativity as we are in

protecting our skin from ultraviolet radiation. “Wherever we live, we can so protect the mind that we will not be affected by other people’s animosities or other people’s criticism or other people’s opposition and we will be able to serve them and help them whatever their attitudes may be towards us.”

Reflection: When Sri Easwaran talks about protecting the mind in this way, he is not talking about protecting it against other people, but from the agitation and animosity that arises in response to difficult situations. How might you use the mantram to protect yourself in this way? How might you remember the mantram more quickly when faced with such situations? How might you treat those situations not as threats but as opportunities for deeper effort?

When it’s time for inspiration, please continue reading from Chapter 10 of *The Bhagavad Gita for Daily Living*. Conclude with 30 minutes of meditation.

Terms & References

From Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, verse 66

asantasya kutah sukham

asantasya – of those who have no peace *kutah* – whence *sukham* – happiness

When you know no peace, how can you know joy?

Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 8, verse 14

Ananyacetah satatam yo mam smarati nityasah tasyaham sulabhah partha nityayuktasya yoginah

Ananyacetah – whose mind does not go elsewhere *satatam* – ever
yo – who *mam* – me *smarati* – remembers *nityasah* – constantly
tasyaham – for him I am *sulabhah* – easy to obtain *partha* – Son of Partha (an epithet for Arjuna)
nityayuktasya – for the one who is constantly in a state of yoga *yoginah* – the yogin

I am easily attained by the person who always remembers me and is attached to nothing else.

Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 10, verse 3.

yo mam ajam anadim ca vetti lokamahesvaram asammudhah sa martyesu sarvapapaih pramucyate

yo – who *mam* – me *ajam* – the birthless, unborn *anadim* – the beginningless *ca* – and
vetti – he knows *lokamahesvaram* – the Lord of the world
asammudhah – undeluded *sa* – he *martyesu* – among mortals
sarvapakaih – from all sins *pramucyate* – he is released

Those who know me as the Lord of all creation, without birth or beginning, know the truth and free themselves from all evil.

Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 10, verse 8.

Aham sarvasya prabhavo mattah sarvam pravartate iti matva bhajante mam budha bhavasamanvitah.

Aham – I *sarvasya* – of all *prabhavo* – the origin
mattah – from me *sarvam* – all, everything *pravartate* – proceeds
iti – thus *matva* – thinking *bhajante* – they worship
mam – me *budha* – the wise ones *bhavasamanvitah* – endowed with the faculty of meditation

I am the source from which all creatures evolve. The wise remember this and worship me with loving devotion.

Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 10, verse 9.

Maccitta madgataprana bodhayantah parasparam kathayantasca mam nityam tusyanti ca ramanti ca

maccitta – those who think of me *madgataprana* – those who have concentrated their vitality on me
bodhayantah – enlightening *parasparam* – one another
kathayantasca – speaking *mam* – of me *nityam* – always
tusyanti – they are content *ca* – and *ramanti* – they rejoice *ca* – and

Their thoughts are all absorbed in me, and all their vitality flows to me. Teaching one another, talking about me always, they are happy and fulfilled.

From Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 10, verse 24

sarasam asmi sagarah

sarasam – of bodies of water *asmi* – I am *sagarah* – the ocean

Among bodies of water I am the ocean.

From Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 10, verse 25

stavaranam himalayah

stavaranam – of immovables *himalayah* – the Himalayas

Among mountains I am the Himalayas

Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 10, verse 31

pavanah pavatam asmi ramah sastrabhritam aham jhasanam makarascasmi srotasam asmi jahnavi

pavanah – among purifiers *pavatam* – the wind *asmi* – I am
ramah – Rama *sastrabhritam* – of the weapon bearing *aham* – I
jhasanam—among sea monsters *makarascasmi* – I am the crocodile
srotasam – of rivers *asmi* – I am *jahnavi* – Ganges (the daughter of Jahnu)

Among purifying forces I am the wind; among warriors, Rama. Of water creatures I am the crocodile, and of rivers I am the Ganges.

“Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Matthew 7:13-14

Glossary

Angelus Silesius (1624-1677) German mystic and poet.

“**Beloved Boss**” Sri Easwaran’s lighthearted reference to Sri Krishna.

Brinda, Ganesha, MacDuff, Luther Names of pets at the ashram (a horse, two dogs, and a cat, respectively).

Buddha [from the Sanskrit *budh* ‘to awake, to understand’] “The Awakened One” Prince Siddhartha was called the Buddha after reaching enlightenment.

Cousteau, Jacques (1910–1997) French marine scientist.

Dasharathi Son of Dasharatha; epithet of Sri Rama, an incarnation of God in the Hindu tradition.

Francis (of Assisi), Saint (c. 1181–1226) Christian mystic. Francis saw the divine in all creatures – hence Brother Wolf, Sister Sparrow.

Gandhi(ji), Mahatma (1869–1948) Led India to freedom through a thirty-year struggle based on nonviolence.

Gandhi the Man Title of Eknath Easwaran’s book describing Gandhi’s personal transformation.

Genoa, Saint Catherine of (1447–1510) An Italian mystic of the Franciscan order.

Gita “The Song,” a shorter title for the Bhagavad Gita, the best known of the Hindu scriptures. It is a spiritual dialogue between Arjuna, representing the human soul, and Sri Krishna, the supreme Self.

Laurel’s Kitchen Best-selling vegetarian cookbook, written by friends of Eknath Easwaran.

Monterey Market A produce market in Berkeley.

Plotinus (204–270) Greek philosopher.

purna Full.

Ramakrishna, Sri (1836–1886) A Bengali saint.

sadhana A body of disciplines or way of life which lead to Self-realization.

samskara A firmly established habit of thought and action, usually negative.

satsang Spiritual gathering. Sri Easwaran uses the word here to refer to informal conversations and discussions he held with members of the ashram.

shanti Deep peace; name of the hall where this talk was given.

sthitaprajna One who is established in wisdom. A term used in the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita.

William Tell A restaurant near the Blue Mountain Center, named after the legendary archer who was forced by a tyrant to shoot an apple placed on the head of his son. He brought two arrows and used the first to shoot the apple. When the tyrant asked what the second arrow was for, Tell replied, “If I had missed the first shot, the second would have been for you.”

How to Use This Course

This video is part of an ongoing monthly series in the teachings of Sri Eknath Easwaran. The talks on this tape, like all of Sri Easwaran's talks, are rich and deep in content. They shed light on many aspects of life, but their true value emerges as we try to apply their teachings in our daily lives. This Guide is meant to be used in conjunction with a daily practice of Sri Easwaran's Eight Point Program, based on passage meditation. We do not recommend following the Practical Exercises if you are not practicing this program according to the instructions given in Sri Easwaran's book *Meditation*, which can be found on our Web site, www.nilgiri.org. A brief list of those points can be found at the back of this *Guide*.

The Practical Exercises are suggestions for you to explore as they seem appropriate in your life. If you are already familiar with Sri Easwaran's books, you will have seen some of these exercises before. But we suggest that you take this opportunity to really put them into practice, and discover their great power to deepen your spiritual life. Try them in moderation, exercising your common sense and not taking them to extreme lengths. Sri Easwaran always emphasized the importance of the middle path.

Before or after watching each talk, we suggest that you read through the notes and the Practical Exercise. Then, after watching the talk, try to put the exercise into action in your life. A week or so later, you may find it interesting to watch the talk again, with the experience of the exercise fresh in your mind. You may want to note the results in a journal.

A full listing of our fellowship groups (called Satsangs) is available on our Web site. For more information about this series, other publications of Sri Easwaran and Nilgiri Press, and a schedule of retreats based on the Eight Point Program, please contact

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