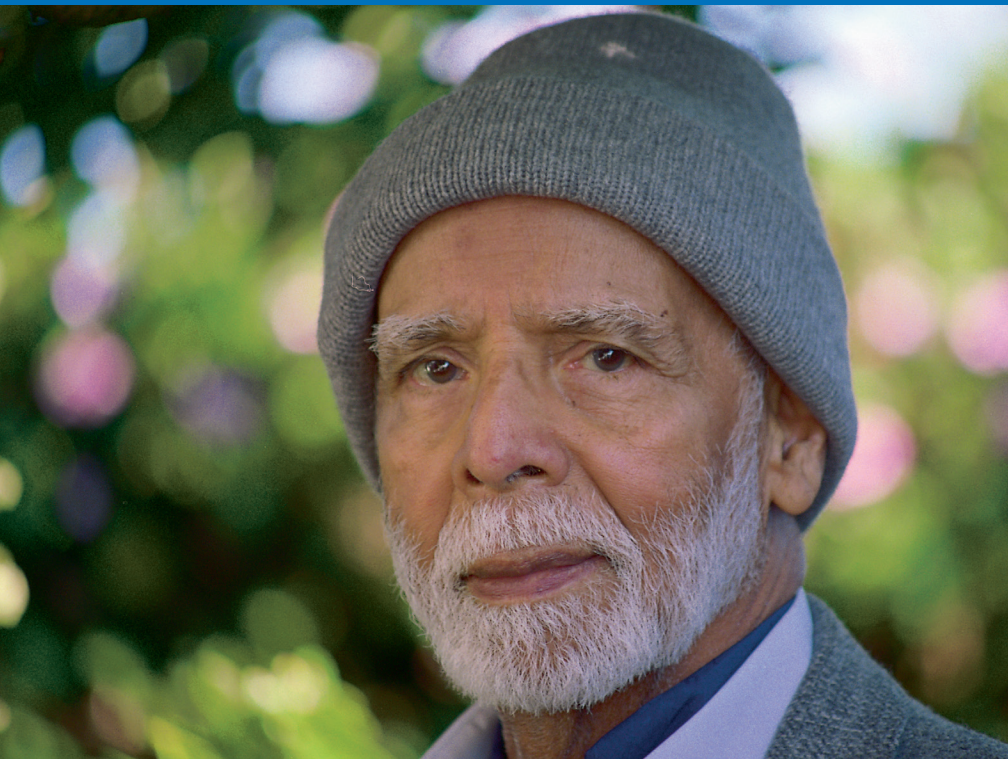


Ekknath Easwaran's

Blue Mountain Journal

Meditation and Spiritual Living



Spring 2015

Does Meditation Really Help the World?

In This Issue

By Christine Easwaran



We are interrupting our coverage of Sri Eknath Easwaran's Eight Point Program in response to an important question that has gained urgency in the last several months: In light of the terrible problems we see around us today, around the world, can our individual efforts at meditation really help?

Some years ago, Easwaran was asked how he would go about combating war. He replied, "I am going about it. I believe, in terms of the law of karma, that the threat of war in the world today is the sum total of the threat of war in the hearts of each one of us. If we put together all the little wars that are raging every minute in all our hearts, we get the world threat of war. To the extent I reestablish peace in my heart, and help those around me to reestablish peace in their hearts, I have combated the threat of war. By the very act of my being, I have transformed my environment."

Can it be that simple? Not quite. "When we practice meditation sincerely and systematically," he explained, "deeper resources have to arise. But in order to make a difference, these resources have to be put to selfless use."

In our lead article, Easwaran summarizes this in three points we can remind ourselves of every morning: "Meditate every day, throw yourself into some form of selfless work, and use your sense of suffering as a powerful motivation to help relieve the suffering of others."

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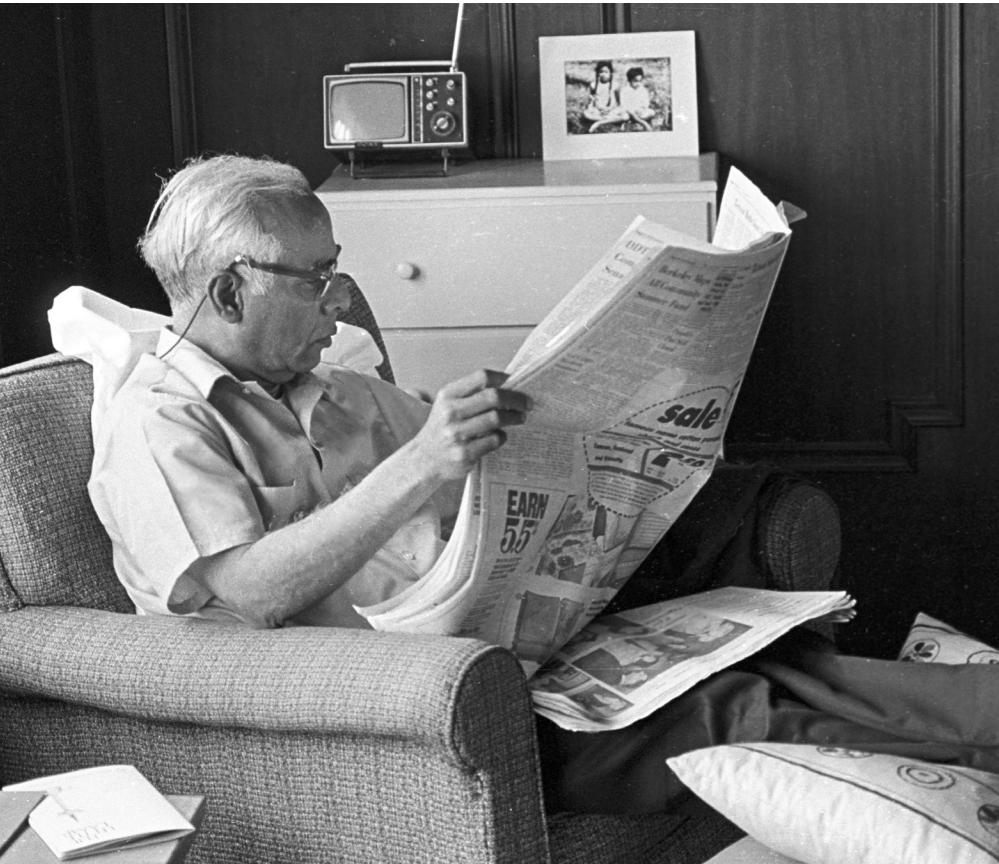
Meditation Is Not a Luxury

With so many urgent physical problems—poverty, pollution, the threat of nuclear war—even good people sometimes wonder if meditation isn't a luxury. Meditation works so quietly that it may seem to have no connection with everyday problems. It may lower your blood pressure, but how does it help the world?

Meditation is a tool. Anyone can use it for releasing tremendous inner resources, and these resources cannot help flowing into loving service.

The whole message of the Bhagavad Gita is to show how to release our full human potential into selfless, skillful action. The kind of action will vary from person to person, and its scope will widen as a person grows. The job of meditation is simply to release the resources, and wherever these resources are released, in whatever field, they throw light on how pressing human problems can be solved.

That is why the Buddha, like the Gita, states emphatically that no one does the world greater service than those who show us how to drive out anger, fear, and greed from the human heart.



Easwaran reading
the news at home in
Oakland, 1968

Can Meditation Really Help the World?

Frequently Asked Questions
answered by Eknath Easwaran

When we see the problems around us now, it seems to be too much. How do you cope?

I do not have a trace of pessimism in me, yet I have the capacity for almost infinite resistance. My constant question is, am I doing my best in the situation? Am I doing everything possible to correct it? Then there is no question of failure.

Recently I've become much more sensitive to the suffering in the world. Does our meditation really help others? I'm beginning to doubt it.

Nobody suffers like the lovers of God, because they are one with others in their suffering. But they are granted an equal measure of joy, too, because God gives them the capacity to help.

I keep in close touch with what happens in the world. I read a wide assortment of periodicals each week just to do so. And there are times when I feel deeply grieved by the suffering I read about, and I wonder why life has to be this way. But I never despair. At those times I go deep, deep into meditation until I reach the very source of love and wisdom that exists in each of us. When I do, I am reassured that all is well.

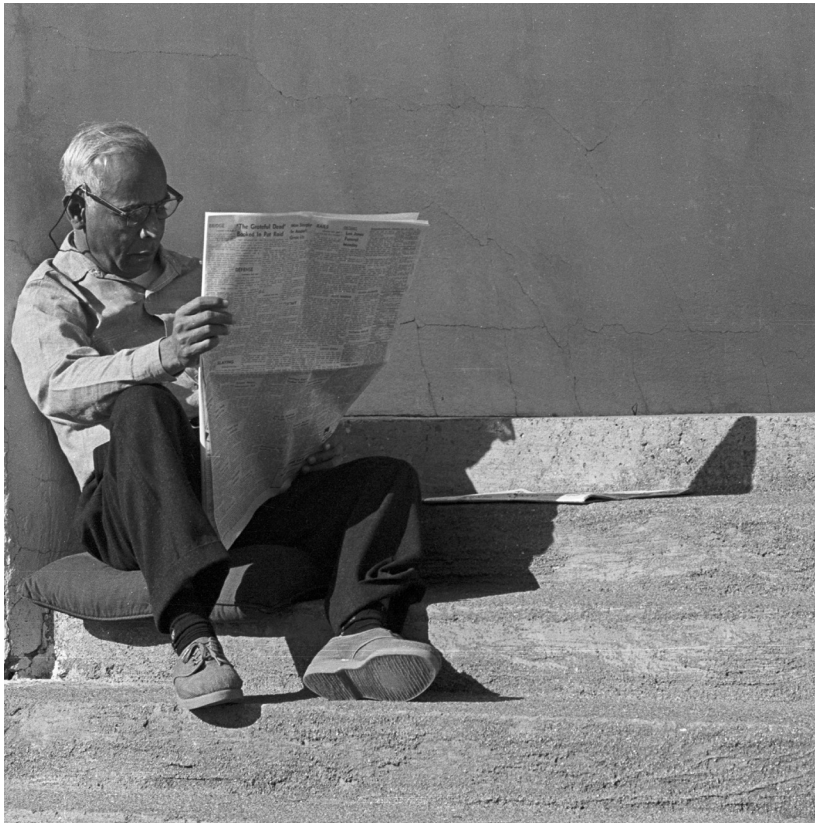
This is not merely some sentimental notion. I return from this awareness charged with the energy and vision I need to continue to try to alleviate this suffering.

Meditate every day, throw yourself into selfless work, and use your sense of suffering as motivation to help others.

So what I would tell all of you is this: meditate every day, throw yourself into some form of selfless work, and use your sense of suffering as a powerful motivation to help relieve the suffering of others. It is a wonderful gift to be able to give.

I still feel so helpless.

In the Sanskrit scriptures, this world in which we live—of birth and death, good and evil, right and wrong, unity and disunity—is called *karmabhumi*, the land of karma, the land of work. When you feel oppressed by the burden of the world and the tragedies enacted on it, please remind yourself



that it is only here, where we find the choice between the best and the worst, that the human being can discover the unity of life.

Strangely, it is in this utter darkness that we begin to grope for light; it is in the midst of utter violence that we begin to yearn for love.

My faith is that if a large number of people take to the practice of meditation and the repetition of the mantram, their intense longing may draw the Lord to inspire ordinary people like you and me to become humble instruments for bringing peace where there is war, food where there is famine, and life where there is death.

I get really angry when I see the state of the world. But I know you say that doesn't help.

In order to reconcile individuals, communities, or countries, we have to have peace in our minds. If we pursue peace with anger and animosity, nothing can be stirred up but conflict.

As the UNESCO constitution puts it, “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.”

Our age has been called the age of anger, and it is true that we are living in one of the most violent periods in history. But there is no reason for anybody to be left to the mercy of these storms, whether they be physical or verbal, whether they happen on the streets, on the battlefield, or in the home. Meditation and the allied disciplines enable you to take your convictions deeper and deeper into consciousness, so that they become a constant source of strength and security—even when you are severely challenged or threatened. I knew hundreds of students in India during

To reconcile others, we must have peace in our minds. Otherwise nothing can be stirred up but conflict.

Gandhi's long struggle for independence from the British Empire. I met hundreds more in Berkeley during the turbulent sixties, when students all over the country were honestly trying to work for peace. I watched their relationships with one another, especially with those who differed with them, and I saw that these relationships often were not harmonious.

Progress comes only from opening others' eyes and hearts, and that can happen only when people's minds are calm.

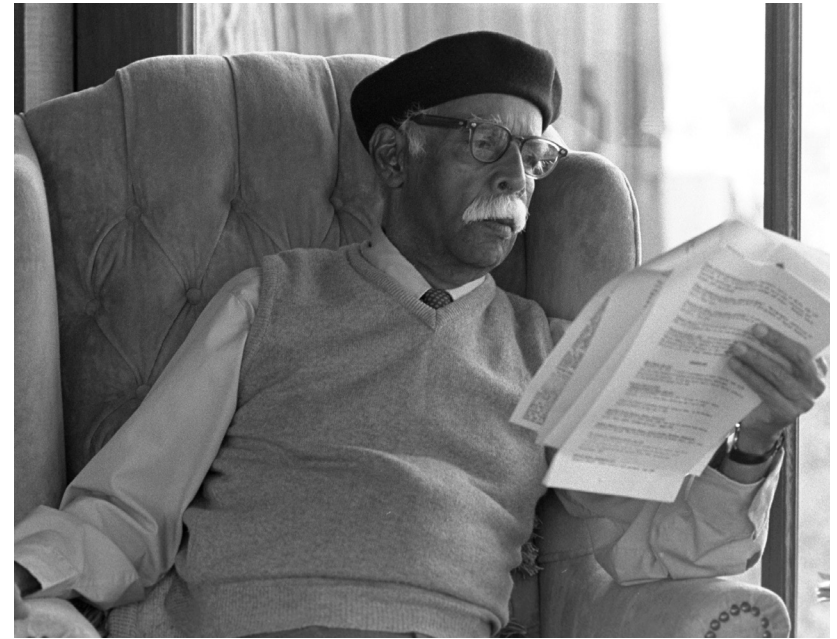
I used to remind my friends that agitating for peace and actually bringing it about are not necessarily the same. Stirring up passions, provoking animosity, and polarizing opposition may sometimes produce short-term gains, but it cannot produce long-term beneficial results because it only clouds minds on both sides. Progress comes only from opening others' eyes and hearts, and that can happen only when people's minds are calm and their fears allayed. It is not enough if one part of your personality says "No more war"; the whole of your personality should be nonviolent.

One of these students told me with chagrin that he once found himself using his fists to promote peace. Things just got out of control. "How did that happen?" he asked incredulously.

I told him not to judge himself too harshly: the will to strike back is part of our biological heritage. Unless we have trained ourselves to harness our anger—to put it to work to heal the situation rather than aggravating it—it is monumentally difficult for most of us to resist the impulse to retaliate.

Didn't you ever get involved in activism? After you met Gandhi, for instance?

Though deeply drawn to Gandhi, I never participated in the Indian freedom movement because it



would have come in the way of my spiritual search. My absorption in Gandhi was not in his politics or economics, which I admired, but to learn the secret of his transformation in character, conduct, and consciousness.

Easwaran
in his study,
Ramagiri, 1985

When I established the Blue Mountain Center of Meditation in 1961 with the help of my wife, Christine, there were a number of burning issues in the air. I had definite opinions on these topics from my spiritual perspective, and when asked about them I replied practically and persuasively, for I believe that a soft answer not only turneth away wrath but can be very much to the point also.

In my books, too, I have expressed my convictions against war and violence, pollution of the environment, and slaughter of animals to provide food for human beings. But I have never forgotten that my goal is not to emphasize these concerns,

but to teach meditation to all those who sincerely desire to realize God in their own consciousness.

What do you think lies at the root of all the violence today?

Many years ago I remember a man on television demonstrating a chain reaction. He stood in a room filled with mouse traps, each of which would release two Ping Pong balls when sprung. At the blackboard he explained a little about uranium atoms being split by one neutron and releasing two. Then, without warning, he casually tossed a single Ping Pong ball into the traps. There was a snap, then a couple of other snaps, and in an instant, with a rattle like hail, the whole room was pelted with balls.

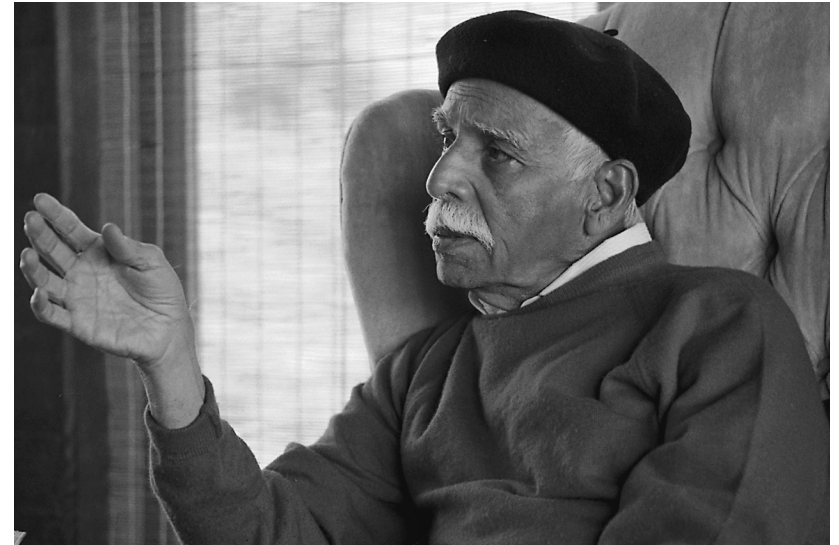
One person in a chronic state of anger spreads anger everywhere. But detachment can break this chain reaction.

Our globe is like that today. One person in a chronic state of anger spreads anger everywhere. When many people live in this state, continually on the edge of resentment, frustration, and hostility, the harvest is violence everywhere—in our hearts, our homes, our streets and cities, between estranged races, factions, and nations.

What can we do about it?

Detachment can break this chain reaction. A cat is conditioned to leap on birds; it has no choice. A dog is conditioned to chase cats. But you and I are human; we have the capacity to choose our response. We can snap the chain of stimulus and response behavior by meeting resentment with patience, hatred with kindness, and fear with trust, in a sustained consistent endeavor to stanch the spread of violence that threatens us all.

Through meditation, as our minds become calmer and self-will fades, detachment comes



and our vision clears. Only then can we see that most of the obstacles to forgiving others do not arise from ideological or philosophical differences. Obstacles arise because we want to impose our way, our self-will, on others, and they want to impose their self-will on us. Seeing this clearly goes a long way toward releasing forgiveness.

But something more than clear seeing is required, and that is the will. It takes a good deal of inner strength to remain calm and compassionate in the face of fierce opposition. But when you can do this, a kind of miracle takes place which all of us can verify. The other person becomes calmer, his or her eyes clear a little too; soon communication is established once again.

Looking at the world today, I wonder how Gandhi's teachings can help.

When I read newspaper accounts of individuals, factions, and governments unleashing provocative

Discussing a service project, 1985

words and actions against each other at the same time they are trying to settle their differences, I am reminded of the wise statement attributed to Mahatma Gandhi that an eye for an eye only makes the whole world blind.

These tragic confrontations are caused by utter forgetfulness of the deep unity that underlies all petty differences of religion, ethnicity, language, or national identity—a forgetfulness that leads to never-ending violence, war, and destruction.

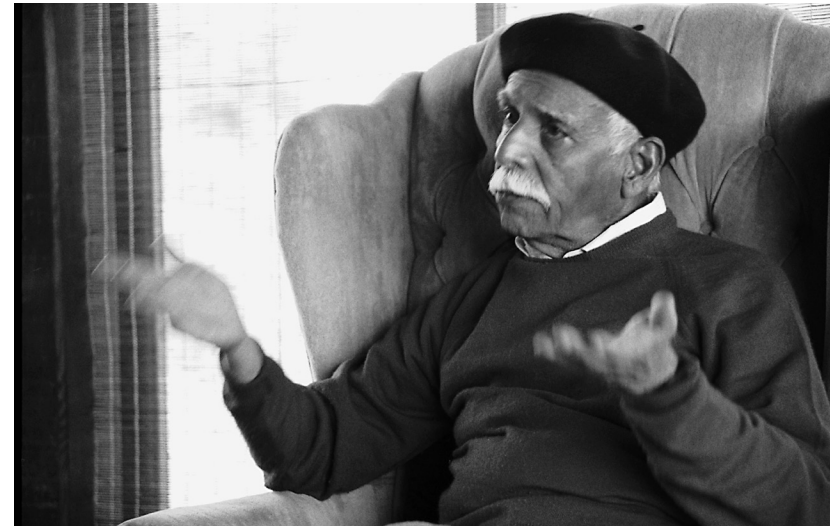
Speaking as a spiritual teacher, let me humbly submit that a true and lasting peace can only come about through the awakening of a deep sense of shared humanity.

One of the worst effects of war is the destruction of compassion—and compassion is what makes us human.

One of the worst effects of war, Gandhi often reminded us, is the destruction of compassion—and compassion is what makes us human. What is the cost of raising generations who have suffered through the agony of the battlefield? What kind of leaders will we create with our wars, and in what kind of world?

There can be no lasting peace until all the parties involved begin to repair the damage of “divide and conquer” with a compassionate principle of “unify and heal.” All of us have ninety percent in common, with only ten percent that is different. It requires dedication, stamina, and a certain artistry to build our relationships on the ninety percent that unites us all. We are then free to enjoy the ten percent difference.

Though Gandhi’s trust was betrayed many times, and despite those who laughed at his guilelessness, he would say quietly that there is no power that works so swiftly, so silently, so directly as love in action.



Can you explain again how your form of meditation helps us learn this kind of love?

In the mystical tradition it is said that the human appeal and the divine response go together. If we deepen our desire for God’s help by memorizing and using in meditation sublime testimonies of the highest qualities a human being can attain, we can bring into our daily lives the deep faith and unshakable security of the great mystics of all religions.

By training our attention on magnificent testimonies such as the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi (“Where there is hatred, let me sow love”), or the Twin Verses of the Compassionate Buddha (“Hatred can never put an end to hatred, love alone can”), or the twelfth chapter of Gandhi’s beloved Bhagavad Gita (“That one I love who is incapable of ill will and returns love for hatred”), we can become what we meditate on. Through this method of meditation we will begin to understand that a human being can become

In the same project discussion, 1985

an immense spiritual force barely contained in a physical form.

War takes place so long as we support it. Nobody makes war but we ourselves.

But, realistically, isn't war a necessary evil?

No evil is necessary. War takes place so long as we support it. When we truly do not want war on earth any more, we can establish everlasting peace; nobody makes war but we ourselves.

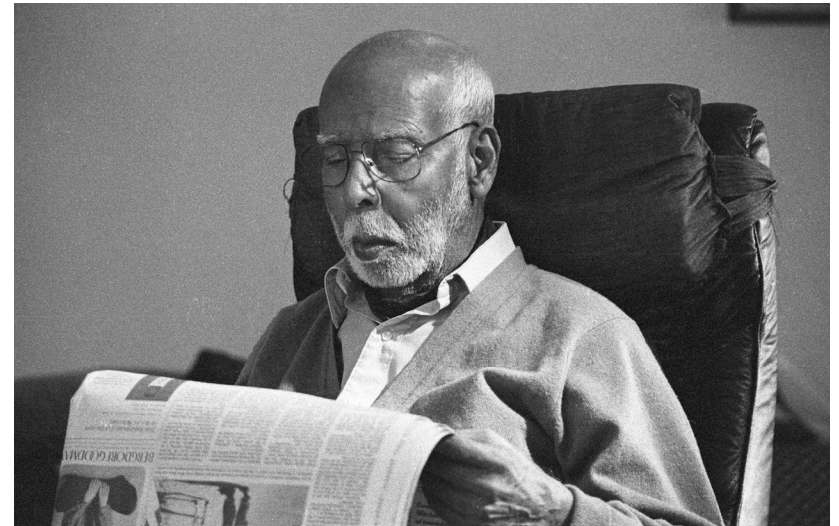
There are many people who will say that it is human nature to hate, to fight, and to kill, but the mystics say this is the law of the beasts. Having become human beings, we have risen above this law. Any human being who hates, who uses violence, who kills, according to the mystics, has gone back to the level of an animal. Living in harmony with all our family, our society, all forms of life—is the truth of life, and this truth alone can support us.

Aren't there times—with terrorism, for instance—when the end justifies the means?

Ends and means are like fruit and seed: each grows from the other. If peace is the end, it must be pursued through peaceful means. Violence only provokes hatred, which brings more violence in its wake. Mahatma Gandhi declared with his life that wrong means can never bring about right ends—just as, in the long run, right means cannot help but bring about right ends.

Is this why we haven't been able to establish lasting peace?

The main reason we have not been able to establish peace in the world today is that we have been using wrong means. The very theory of the balance of power—or, as it was called during the



Cold War, the balance of terror—contradicts the unity of life. You try to frighten me more, I try to frighten you more, and we call it peace if neither side attacks! Economic sanctions, manipulating other countries' food supply, selling arms, undermining the freedom of other people to lead their own lives—all these are wrong means, whatever end we intend to achieve by them. Therefore their results are tainted, as transient as writing on water.

Ramagiri, 1997

Yesterday at the beach I saw an elaborate castle made of sand. When we returned after a long, brisk walk, the waves had washed everything away. That is what happens to even the best efforts to bring peace to the world when we do not use right means: understanding, sympathy, education, respect. This applies in all human situations, at all levels from individual to international.

Can you say more about this?

When statesmen and politicians view other nations through the distorting lens of hatred and

Our priorities are upside down. We long for peace but work for war, often under the label of defense.

suspicion, the policies they come up with only keep the fires of hostility smoldering. Jesus gave us a path that matches means to ends: “Do good to them that hate you.” This should be the basis even of foreign policy. There is no surer route to building trust and dispelling fear, the prime mover behind all arms races.

Because we see as we are, not only are our policies backward but our priorities are upside down. We long for peace but work for war, often under the label of defense. That is where the time, talent, and resources of some of our “best and brightest” go. Being a scientist is a tremendous responsibility. If just half a dozen top scientists from the research laboratories of great universities should withdraw their support from work that serves military purposes, it would be a tremendous contribution to peace.

As I write this, more than thirty major wars are raging. Many of the fiercest are not wars of one army against another, but fratricidal attempts by members of one religion, one sect, one race, one ethnic group, to destroy another completely.

To have peace we must learn to see where we stand on common ground, beginning with certain basic truths: that people in all countries are essentially the same, whatever governments happen to be in power, and that neither side threatens the other as much as this kind of conflict threatens them both.

Isn't it all pretty hopeless, frankly?

My grandmother was born into the *kshatriya* caste—the caste that provided ancient India's fiercest warriors. She often reminded me of the distinguishing mark of a *kshatriya*: no matter how

desperate the battle, there will be no wounds on his back. She taught me that every human being is born to fight like this, with the utmost courage and endurance.

Yet she never neglected to add that when we fight others we always lose. When the smoke clears, she would say, we will have lost a potential friend and gained an enemy. But each time we fight against the forces that hold us down and keep us from loving, we draw a little closer to the rest of life.

The terrorism that has become almost commonplace in many parts of the world should be proof enough that when we battle others—whether for pride or profit or possessions—all we win are enemies. Happiness built on the suffering of others will not last long; when our power fades, as it eventually must, we reap a bitter harvest of ill will, resentment, and revenge.

But when the battle is waged within, against the forces of anger and selfishness we find in our own hearts, even our smallest triumph benefits the whole world. The energy, courage, and clarity released make us a dynamic force for good: the power of such a person is not divided by five billion competitors but multiplied by five billion friends.

What can we do practically to achieve this?

To change course like this, we human beings have to learn to talk to each other even when our opinions differ. No problem is insoluble if we are prepared to sit down and listen respectfully to what the other person has to say.

This is true not only in the home but in areas of international friction as well. As Winston Churchill

When we fight others, we always lose. We lose a potential friend and gain an enemy.

No problem is insoluble if we are prepared to sit down and listen respectfully to what the other person has to say.

put it, “It is better to jaw, jaw, jaw than war, war, war.” I think many of our troubles, from personal quarrels to global conflicts, can be attributed to our inability to put aside resentments about the past and focus with clarity and common sense on the problem at hand.

In international affairs as in individual relationships, when we slip and offend one another or say thoughtless things, it helps to remember that making mistakes is all part of living and learning. Meditation can give us the capacity to learn from those mistakes and to put them behind us.

What about our governments?

I am respectful of governments, but I have no illusion that peace will come through their efforts. It is governments that have got us into this dilemma, with our support; now it is we, the people, who must take the lead in insisting on a wholly different approach.

It is not first-strike capacity but first-trust capacity that we should be pursuing with all our might. It would cost a good deal less, and it would release economic and human resources into the bargain. Isn't this the message that Jesus' life conveys? Each one of us, by establishing peace in our minds and practicing it in all our relationships, can hasten the day when peace will reign on earth.

If each of us, through the example of our own lives, can inspire two more people every year to meditate and to live at peace with those around them, it will have an incalculably great effect in creating a climate of peace. That is my ambition, and that is why I say I am a terribly ambitious man. You and I make peace. You and I make war. It all depends on us.

You and I make peace. You and I make war. It all depends on us.

The Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

Where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

To be consoled as to console,

To be understood as to understand,

To be loved as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

It is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life.

Spreading Peace

Voices from the BMCM Young Adult Meditators Forum

Hi All,

Does meditation help the world? Woah! What a fascinating prompt. At first I was a little intimidated and couldn't see how this related to my little, ordinary life. Though, after the question sat with me for a bit, a memory popped up really vividly.

I work as a teacher with students age 6–13 and helping facilitate good activities during recess and break times is always a challenge.

One day, soon after I had started this job, I noticed that the students had developed a game playing with pretend guns and the game was full of actions and conversations that started sending off warning bells in my head.

I felt so uncomfortable with what was happening during recess that I approached my boss, to find out what our general policy was. He shrugged me off saying “kids will be kids” and that he didn't think we should do anything. I left the conversation feeling really disheartened and at a loss of what to do next.

I tried to just drop it, like he wanted, but I just couldn't. I definitely had a mantram moment and slowed down enough that I could focus my thoughts and figure out exactly what I wanted to say. I went back to my boss and explained to him that I was very uncomfortable with gun violence, even (especially!) pretend and that it was important to me that this not be part of acceptable play at our school. It was clear that he remained

unconvinced, but he said I could go and speak to the students.

I was nervous about exactly what I was going to say to the students and whether it would turn into an extensive philosophical debate...but of course it wasn't! The students had no problem dropping their game and a friendly game of tag sprang up immediately.

As I watched the students playing their new game I was wondering whether I'd been overreacting when a parent approached me and thanked me for stopping the game. She, too, had been concerned but didn't want to impose on the school or the other children.

In the *Gita for Daily Living*, Easwaran says: “Even one person standing against violence, whether it is in the home, in the community, or between nations, can be a source of inspiration for everyone who comes in contact with him or her.”

It's hard for me to think about small instances



like this as “taking a stand against violence” because often that feels too grand, but what does stand out for me from Easwaran’s teachings is the importance of each small decision in each small moment and how it’s in those choices that we’re able to reshape our lives and the world around us.

I’m looking forward to hearing from others!

Dear eSatsang,

I was happy to see the prompt about violence in our world today in my inbox. It’s an issue that has been weighing heavily on me lately. Every day we hear more news about atrocities in the Middle East, about weekly shootings in US schools and public spaces, about the race riots in Ferguson MO, etc. The list is alarmingly long, and some days I have a hard time not feeling incredibly upset by it all.

Easwaran’s teachings have helped me feel not so helpless. I often ask myself what I could possibly do to ease these issues. Unfortunately



I see little that can be done directly. But I have great confidence in “being the change I wish to see in the world,” in following Easwaran’s advice to sow peace in my own mind, with the hope that eventually I will be able to spread that peace to my family, community, and world. I honestly think that taking up the spiritual path is one of the most vital, effective endeavors against violence anyone could undertake.

I become hopeful when I feel harmony in my relationships that didn’t exist before I committed to the eight points. My sister last summer said, “Wow, you are way nicer than you used to be!” Ha ha. And the other night I have to say I was quite proud of myself when I stopped by my boyfriend’s house to find him in a rather bad mood after a long, hard day at work. Initially I was annoyed—couldn’t he just be happy to see me? Instead I listened to him vent with my full attention and sympathized as much as I could. He seemed relieved and thankful that I had listened and he soon cheered up. Success!

It’s all about making all our actions loving, and working up the ladder to more constant loving words, and then to loving thoughts. As others have also pointed out, I find one of the easiest and most concrete ways to be more loving is to listen to others one-pointedly. Put that person’s expression before your own thoughts and judgments. It usually can be done.

If Easwaran were here, I would definitely ask him what more we could do to stop the incredible violence in the world. But I think he would say what I already know in my heart: keep meditating. Keep putting others first. Keep loving those that irk you, and everyone else, too.

Hi everyone,

Thanks for all your fantastic messages. I totally agree that “taking up the spiritual path is one of the most vital, effective endeavors against violence anyone could undertake.” A small example came to mind:

Last year, I had a difficult conversation with a family member. We held very different points of view, and I felt hurt and upset. I kept on wanting to interrupt and clarify my position, or simply to walk away.

Instead, I listened with all the one-pointed attention I could muster. I really tried to understand his point of view and put myself in his shoes. It was incredibly hard. I repeated the mantram silently every time I felt frustrated, and then gave him more attention. I meditated on the Prayer of St Francis that evening and the next morning.

The next time we spoke, it felt like I was speaking to a different person. He was kind and wanted to find out more about where I was coming from. He apologized for the previous day’s conversation. I had to pinch myself to believe it! Simply through applying the eight points we came to a common understanding and grew closer than ever before. Whatever frustrated or hurt feelings we had were transformed into patience and love. I’m sure that this result helped everyone else we came in contact with over that time. I’ll never forget it, and I don’t think he will either.

Easwaran tells us that until we have peace in our family and community, we can’t have peace in the world. I understand that now just a little bit more.

A New Year’s Resolution

By Eknath Easwaran

We must learn how to tear out all the pages in our mental notebook where memory has recorded in gruesome detail everything unpleasant that was said or done to us. Tear out all the old resentful episodes from the past and never bother dwelling on any of them again. Otherwise they are going to cause a lot of pain in the year to come. Then go into the New Year with a fresh resolve to keep that kind of episode from causing further anguish. This is the most pressing New Year’s resolution there can be.

Spiritual psychology and secular psychology agree that if we are able to trace some of our personal resentments and personal conflicts, we shall often find their seeds buried in the distant past. Our early traumas at home and at school play a formative role in our later emotional life.

But here is where the two psychologies diverge. Great spiritual psychologists like the Compassionate Buddha all give us the same specific method for dealing with resentments and conflicts. If by constantly pulling attention away to the present you can persuade your mind not to dwell on the past, there can be no resentment, no ill will of any kind. As the Buddha puts it so beautifully in the Dhammapada, “Give up what is before, what is behind, and cross the stream. Then will your mind be free.”

To grasp this takes some thought and a certain amount of experience. But now, when people confide in me regarding their personal difficulties—some of which seem to go on and on—I have no hesitation in concluding that it is those whose

Tear out all the old resentful episodes from the past and never bother dwelling on them again.

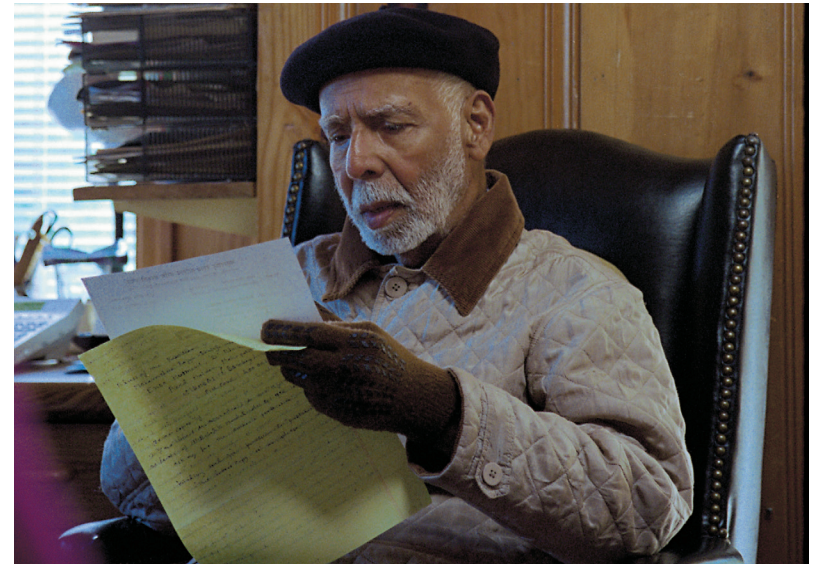
attention is caught in the past who are most often subject to unreasonable agitation. In such people, the most minute stimulus can bring into action a hostile response that has been building up over a long, long period. There is no sense in blaming them. Most of their mind is not here; it is back there.

There are people, for example, who let their mind dwell on some little phrase a parent or teacher may have aimed at them in a moment of frustration. Eventually they will not be able to refrain from dwelling on it, for it gives them an odd kind of satisfaction. This little hostile seed, which would die a natural death if left to itself, they keep watering with their tears and fertilizing with their attention until it grows into a giant poison oak bush. Even more tragic, instead of just dwelling on one particular outburst of anger or criticism, some of us develop a tendency to dwell on all our negative emotions. When we do this for a long period of time, we are in for a lot of trouble in our personal relations.

Strong memories are time bombs ticking away in the depths of consciousness, waiting to be set off.

Strong memories are time bombs. Whether the incidents took place five years ago or fifty, the emotional charge remains intact and the bomb is down there ticking. We have many of these time bombs ticking away in the depths of our consciousness, and some innocent little remark has only to brush that bomb by indirect association to make us flare up at people without rhyme or reason. It is not so much that the person who made the remark did anything intentional; it is just that we have these emotional charges there waiting to be set off.

In that quiet statement about setting the mind free, the Buddha is asking a very pertinent



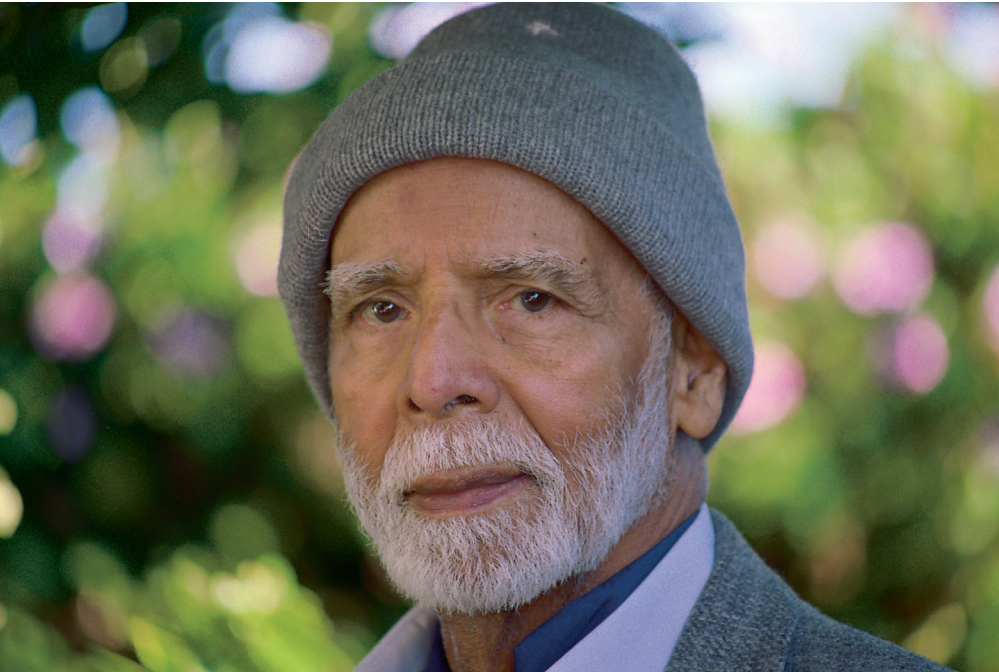
question. If you can only turn your attention away from the past—not only five or fifty years ago but even yesterday—and bring it into today, how will you be able to hold on to resentment? To be hostile you have to be caught up in the past; that is the stuff of which this phantom is made. Without the past, what cause could you possibly have for anger?

Realizing this, the great sages of all religions have been able to make an astounding statement: “We don’t even understand any more what resentment is.” This unburdening of memory is the greatest relief in life.

To reach this blessed state, I would suggest first of all that whenever you find yourself getting resentful, remind yourself that it is not just one particular person who is responsible for your resentment, it is also the many years you have put into brooding on resentment. Even this realization is of some help.

In the BMCM office reading mail from journal readers, 1996.

Turn attention away from the past. This unburdening of memory is the greatest relief in life.



A Message to Meditators

You are all aware how much strife and bloodshed are taking place in the Middle East, in some of the countries around Russia, in what was Yugoslavia, and in some countries in Africa. These serious problems cannot be solved by political and economic measures alone. They need an understanding heart, a capacity to forgive, and the endurance to resist nonviolently to win over the opposition.

In our own country, crime and violence have become the foremost problems of our day.

I hope every one of you will carry home the message that I have been trying, with the help of many dear friends, to spread for more than thirty years in this country.

The practice of meditation can enable us to move away from the love of power and cultivate the power of love for our family, country, and the whole world.

May God bless you all.

Retreat Calendar 2015

At the Blue Mountain Center in Tomales, California

A comfortable, welcoming retreat house in beautiful Northern California

- **Introductory Weekends:** Everything you need to establish a successful daily practice. *February 27–March 1, June 12–14, August 7–9*
- **Young Adult Weekends:** Inspiration and spiritual community with others in their 20s and 30s. *February 13–15, November 6–8*
- **Returnee Weekends:** An easy-to-schedule spiritual boost. *March 20–22, May 15–17, September 11–13*
- **Senior Half-Weeks:** Learn how to make the most out of your retirement years; or, at any age, how to face a serious illness with courage and grace. *March 6–10, August 14–18*
- **Weeklongs:** Systematically deepen and replenish your practice with other longtime passage meditators. *April 18–24, May 30–June 5, July 11–17, August 22–28, September 19–25, October 10–16*

Regional Retreats *(see dates online)*

One-day & Weekend retreats with introductory & returnee workshops
CA (Encino, San Diego), CO (Golden), IL (Chicago),
NY (Ossining), OR (Mt. Angel), TX (Dallas)

There is a sliding scale for retreat fees. For a scholarship, please write to financial.aid@easwaran.org.

www.easwaran.org/retreats

800 475 2369

Come to a Tomales Retreat

Your meditation practice is not just for you—it benefits everyone around you. Making time for a Tomales retreat is an endeavor which will impact your spiritual practice for years to come:

- Find out how to make your meditation regular
- Take your next step to deepen your practice
- Navigate your current challenges using meditation and the eight points



At our retreat house in Tomales (1 hour north of San Francisco)

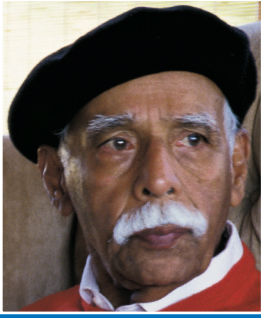
- Programs to match your specific needs
- A deeply spiritual atmosphere
- Warm spiritual companionship and quiet reflection
- Visit the BMCM's spiritual community

2015 Introductory Webinar Series

We are expanding our free one-hour webinar series in 2015. Please join us online for satsang, inspiration, and instruction.

- **Free Webinar 1 Learn to meditate:** Learn how to meditate on a passage; find out why this method is so powerful, and what it can do for you. *September 12*
- **Free Webinar 2 Make the most of your meditation:** Learn about the other points in Easwaran's program for spiritual living, and how they can help you stay calm, kind, and focused throughout the day. *March 28, October 31*

www.easwaran.org/webinar



When you practice meditation, you are working hard for the welfare of the world, for the regeneration of society, for the establishment of peace on earth and good will among mankind.

This cannot be done by governments or corporations. It can only be done by millions of little people in small groups, working in all countries, through their personal example.

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