

Ekknath Easwaran on Meditation & Spiritual Living

# Blue Mountain Journal

FALL 2019



Seeing the  
Lord in All

## In This Issue



“I don’t have to close my eyes in meditation to see God,” Easwaran writes. “I see nothing else.” This lofty state may seem beyond our reach, but in this journal Easwaran gives practical ways in which we too can cultivate the vision of the Lord.

Whenever we go against our self-will, whenever we refrain from unkind words and even thoughts, whenever we respond patiently to others even if they are hostile to us, he says, we are becoming a little more aware of the Lord. Then, through spiritual disciplines, “we will see God everywhere, serve him everywhere, worship her everywhere.”

For Easwaran this means seeing God in every living creature. In this journal we celebrate Easwaran’s rich relationships not only with people but also with animals, including the tiny goat, Gautami, pictured on the cover. We start with Easwaran’s commentary on that photo.

— Sue Craig and the BMCM Editorial Team

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P.O. Box 256, Tomales, CA 94971,  
info@bmcmm.org, www.bmcmm.org,  
707.878.2369

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## The same spark as you and I

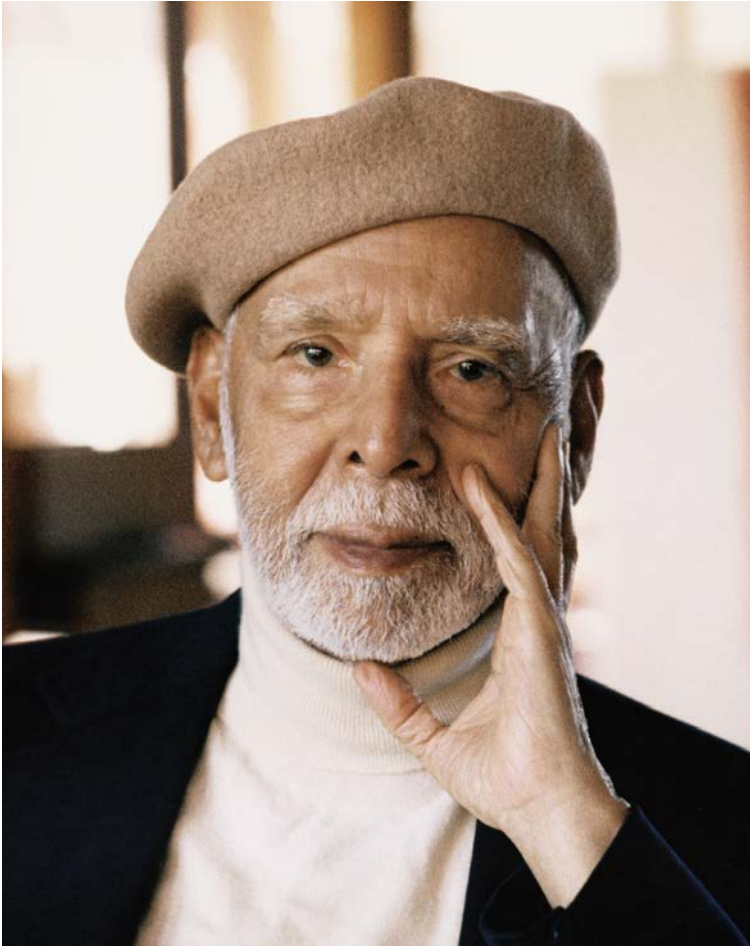
The divine fragment called the Atman is the same in all people, all races, all creatures. This is not theory; that is how you actually see life after the Self is realized.

The other day a kid was born prematurely to one of our angora goats, and a friend took a picture of me holding the tiny, fragile creature.

When I saw the photograph I said, “That’s not just a guy and a goat.” I was not looking at myself; I saw the Atman, realized in me through billions of years of evolution and still latent in little Gautami, the goat, to be revealed in her after perhaps millions of years of evolution more.

In that picture Gautami and I are gazing into each other’s eyes. She is marveling, “I’m going to look like you someday!” And I am smiling back: “Well, millions of years ago I looked like you.” That awareness fills my heart with joy and releases an immense desire to save the lives of all these creatures, knowing they are not merely my kith and kin but the same spark as you and I.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Ashman', written in a cursive style.



Easwaran, 1990s.

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# Seeing God Everywhere

Eknath Easwaran

When Swami Vivekananda was a young college student, then called Naren, he used to go about Calcutta asking religious men and women a curious question: “Have you seen God?” They all said no until he went up to Sri Ramakrishna, who replied with the certitude of a God-realized man, “My boy, I see God more clearly than I see you.”

That will be our experience also. That is the experience for which all of us have come into life. And after this experience we love our family more, we love our partner more, we love our children more, we love our neighbors more, we love our country more – and the whole world will become our country.

In every religion there have been ordinary people like you and me who have, for no reason that we can put forward, turned inwards and entered the very depths of the unconscious where they see the Supreme Reality – call him Krishna, call him Buddha, call him Christ, call him Allah, call her the Divine Mother – and come back transformed in character, conduct, and consciousness to become a living light to all those around them.

## He is within everyone

The greatest misunderstanding about religion arises from our physical orientation. Many intelligent people assume that religion asserts a God who is “out there” somewhere, swinging in a hammock between two galaxies. God is not outside us somewhere; he is within us, in the very depths of our consciousness. As the Sufis put it, he is closer to me than my jugular vein.

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And not only within us: he is within everyone. People may be selfish, they may be violent, they may be causing a lot of trouble to everybody including themselves: God is still present in them and in every other human being on earth.

In all the world's great religions, this is the purpose of human life: to realize God in the depths of our consciousness. It means discovering that we are not physical creatures that can be satisfied with physical gratifications, but spiritual beings made in the image of God. This supreme discovery brings a complete transformation of personality that cannot help making profound changes in the world around us.

That is why I say that as I present it, religion is the solution to all the problems that burden us today. In a truly religious country we would have no wars, no violence, no exploitation, no pollution of air and water – for the simple reason that when you realize God, you see God in everyone.

## **A practical interpretation**

For a few great men and women of God, who are capable of total devotion to a divine incarnation, seeing God may mean an actual vision. In the Christian tradition, for example, Saint Francis of Assisi was blessed with visions of Jesus the Christ, and in India Sri Ramakrishna saw the Lord as the Divine Mother.

But while the idea of seeing visions and hearing angelic voices may capture our imagination, I would like to present a much more practical interpretation of what it means to see God. As Sri Krishna tells us in the Bhagavad Gita, the man or woman who performs all actions as an offering to the Lord, without a trace of selfish attachment or ill will, is aware of the Lord always.

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In our own age, Mahatma Gandhi is a perfect example of what this kind of awareness means. With his characteristic candor, Gandhi once said that he had seen no lights, heard no voices, and witnessed no visions. But Gandhi was nonetheless a man of immense spiritual awareness. He was able to work tirelessly for the welfare of all those around him – not just of those who were for him, but of those who were opposed to him also – without any thought of his own comfort or prestige, disarming his opposition not through force but through the power of his love.

### **A vision we can cultivate**

This is the vision of the Lord which we can cultivate everywhere, all the time.

Whenever we are able to forget our own petty satisfactions in working for the welfare of the whole, whether it is for our family, our community, or our world, we are becoming a little more aware of the Lord.

Whenever we are able to remember that what hurts us hurts others too, and are able to refrain from unkind words and deeds and even thoughts, we are becoming a little more aware of the Lord. Whenever we are able to respond patiently and positively to others even if they are hostile to us or rub us the wrong way, we are becoming a little more aware of the Lord.

Through the practice of spiritual disciplines, we can awaken into the highest life possible: we will see God everywhere, serve him everywhere, worship her everywhere.

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## Seeing the Lord in all creatures

The mark of the man or woman who has become united with the Lord is that he or she sees the Lord in all fellow beings, in every form of life. In one of the delightful anecdotes in the Mahābhārata, Dharmaputra, the oldest of the Pandavas, turns up at the gates of heaven with his dog.

Dvarapala, the gatekeeper, takes down all the vital information about Dharmaputra – name, address, siblings – and then he notices the dog.

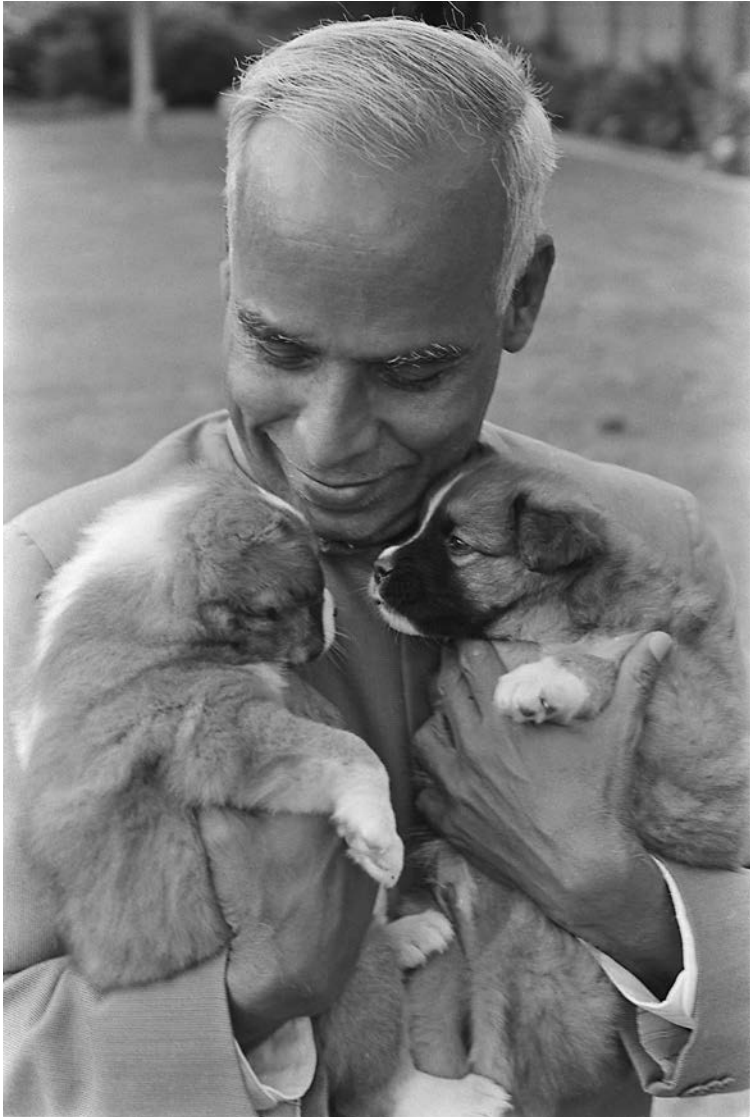
“Sorry,” says Dvarapala, “we don’t admit dogs. See that little sign? It says Dogs Not Allowed.”

Then follows an awfully confusing situation: Dharmaputra is established in the Lord and should be admitted, but what should be done about the dog?

Finally Dvarapala gives Dharmaputra a choice: to enter heaven alone, without the dog, or to go back where he came from with his dog. Without the slightest hesitation, Dharmaputra chooses to be with his dog, who is then immediately revealed as Lord Krishna in disguise.

When you are always aware of the unity of life, you see the Lord in every living creature. To put it more personally, you see everyone as dear to you; every child is your child, and every dog is your dog. I don’t think anyone has ever put it more beautifully than the Compassionate Buddha, when he tells us that we should love and protect every man, every woman, every child, every creature on earth, the way a mother loves and protects her only child.





Easwaran, 1960s.

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## The saddest sight

Today it was smoggy, so we sought fresh air and freedom from the hurly-burly of city life by going to the Marina. We walked on the pier for a long distance, and from beginning to end it was a very depressing spectacle.

The pier was crowded with hundreds of men, women, and children, all fishing. There were chairs, sleeping bags, and transistor radios all over the place contributing to the pandemonium. A man was sleeping, but he still had his fishing rod in hand. There were little children six and seven years old, beautiful boys and girls being taught to kill fish. Parents were giving instructions to their children and friends to their friends. But to me the saddest sight of all was when the fish were landed. Still alive, they were dashed against the wooden plank, and the hooks torn away.

It is perhaps not fair to condemn or censure these people; we can only try to help them by our own personal example. They were not really cruel, but insensitive. This can happen to all of us when we become preoccupied with our own pleasure and forget the unity underlying all life. When we know this, we can begin to transform any selfish responses into the positive ones of compassion and sensitivity to the welfare of all living creatures.

William Blake, who saw this unity of life, said:

A robin red-breast in a cage  
Puts all heaven in a rage . . .  
A dog starved at his master's gate  
Predicts the ruin of the State.

Even by putting a little robin into a cage, the cosmic order is violated; the law of karma is at work all the time in the

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smallest details of life. Everything is closely interwoven, and even a little hook causing pain in the smallest fish disturbs the consciousness of the Lord.

## **Respect our kinship with all creatures**

We can look at our deep kinship with all living creatures in terms of the long story of evolution. According to this, our friend Garry was a little orchid long, long ago; that is why he likes them so much. He loves orchids and grows them and looks after them because of this faint memory that gives him a sense of unity with the orchid.

Similarly, according to the theory of reincarnation, it is possible that on that pier I remembered in a very dim way the days when I used to splash about in the water. I remembered the joy and the sparkle of it and identified myself with the fish as if it were really I who was swimming about.

This is what spiritual awareness means. It was not just the fish out there on the pier who were suffering, as separate beings – I was suffering in them. Until we become aware of this unity underlying all life, all talk of spiritual awareness is just playing games.

Particularly where children are concerned, it is our duty to remind others, as my spiritual teacher, my grandmother, reminded me, that we must respect our kinship with all living creatures. This can be conveyed in simple language like my granny's. She used to tell me, "Squirrels have grannies, and if you hurt a squirrel, it'll go complain to its granny." I had never thought about animals like that, and it really opened my eyes. Similarly our children can understand the simple story that little fish have grandmas and grandpas to whom they run complaining and crying when we hurt them.



Easwaran with a young calf at Ramagiri, 1970s.

## Awareness of unity of life

We should try to practice this awareness of the unity of life in every relationship. I am a vegetarian, for example, because I know that the divinity that is present in my heart and yours is present in every living thing. A vegetarian diet respects this partnership among all forms of life and meets our nutritional needs with a minimum demand on the earth's resources.

Years ago, when I would go to restaurants where my eating habits caused consternation, the staff would say: "You are a vegetarian; you will love fish." I used to add, "I do love fish; that's just why I don't eat them." Once we saw a French movie, which you couldn't say was influenced by the Hindu mystics, in which a little boy who had pet rabbits was served rabbit for

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dinner. He said, “I don’t eat my buddies.” This is the language of the Gita: “You don’t eat your buddies.”

It used to be very difficult to find a restaurant that served vegetarian food. Now, however, there are good vegetarian restaurants springing up in many cities, and at every chance we get, we can recommend these restaurants to our friends. This is a simple way of showing our love and respect for the Lord, who lives in the lamb, the deer, the cow, and all other forms of life.

### **Great compassion for animals**

When we are conditioned by cultural habits, it can be hard to understand that eating meat violates the indivisible unity of life. Here each person is at liberty to do a certain amount of experimentation. The changeover from nonvegetarian to vegetarian food can be made gradually.

One of the remarkable developments in meditation is that even if we take to meditation without any desire to practice these related disciplines, after a while we will be drawn to them. As meditation dispels the delusion of separateness, we become more and more conscious of a sense of fellowship with all creatures. As our spiritual awareness deepens, we will come to have great compassion for animals and will never want to be a party to their ill-treatment.

The other day, while going to the beach, I was delighted to see the young lambs, some black-faced, some white-faced, running about on the green hills just like children. When we got to the beach, I enjoyed watching the sea gulls and those little creatures that I love so much, the sandpipers, who are like the imp Ariel in Shakespeare’s *Tempest*. They go up to the very edge of the water, and when a wave rolls in, they come



Easwaran with two ashram dogs, 1980s.

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running back on their thin little legs. We also saw three deer, a mother and two fawns, which had come down onto the beach. The people living nearby must have been very good to these deer for them to have such confidence; they were playing about, sure that the people loved them and wouldn't harm them in any way.

## All belongs to the Lord

It is the urgent need of our time to recognize the unity of all forms of life, and the intimate relationship between water, earth, air, plants, and all creatures. Ecologists tell us that there is an interpenetrating relationship among all things which we can violate only at our peril.

The Isha Upanishad – a short Upanishad consisting of only a page, which Mahatma Gandhi says contains the secret of all life – says,

The Lord is enshrined in the hearts of all. The Lord is the supreme Reality. Rejoice in him through renunciation. Covet nothing. All belongs to the Lord.

Sometimes I used to see billboard signs saying, “Ford country.” I would say, “No. No. It's not Ford country; it's all God's country.” Mountains, rivers, air, seas, forests: all belong to the Lord.

It is because we have forgotten this, or haven't even understood it, that we have polluted the air to such an extent that our children are paying the price. Air is more important to us than any material possession. When we pollute the air, we are forgetting not just that God made the air but that God became the air. If we don't take action to correct the situation, our children's children will pay a very high penalty for it.

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For me, not only are all human beings part of my family; so are the seas, the mountains, the rivers, the trees. After all, it isn't governments and corporations that supply me with oxygen; it is trees, plants, and plankton. They are my dear friends, my kith and kin.

## The simple life

I must have talked thousands of times in the last twenty-five years on the subject of keeping the environment clean and wholesome for our children. Anybody who buys things he does not need is not a lover of children. Anyone who produces things that pollute the environment is not a lover of children. The mass production of all these ridiculous items I see advertised takes a staggering toll on the quality of our air, water, land, and wildlife. If we want to show love for our children everywhere, we can make sure that we are not a party to polluting the environment under any circumstances at all.

This is why I quote Gandhi always in a plea for simplifying life. He uses very practical language: "There is enough for everybody's need, but there isn't enough for everybody's greed."

The simple life can be aesthetically very satisfying. We do not have to become ascetics – vegetarian cuisine, for instance, is thoroughly delicious and satisfying. We can live in reasonable comfort, and have all the necessary supplies without damaging our environment.

## Living with people

But while it is good to be friendly with trees and animals, it is most important to be friendly with human beings. It is above all in our human relationships that we realize the unity of life. Only when you have lowered all the barriers between yourself



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and others will there be no barrier between you and the Lord within.

When we were living on the Blue Mountain in India, we ran into a young fellow from the Northwest who used to come to our place now and then and had become very fond of us. He had led a very lonely life: if ever there was a lone spiritual wolf, it was he. He used to avoid people completely, staying in lonely places so as not to come in contact with them.

### **An altercation**

Sometimes he would twit me affectionately for always being with people, and would invite me to go on long walks to see the trees and hills. But even though I admire a beautiful landscape, I pleaded guilty to the charge of being fonder of people than of trees. I didn't try to argue with him when he praised the virtue of solitude, but one day a suitable opportunity presented itself, and I explained my point of view.

He was fond of talking about "flower power" and about being able naturally to love everybody. One day he was working in the garden in the midst of the flowers with the gardener's son, who was given to fist power. There was some altercation between them, and the gardener's son, being a simple boy, took a spade and threatened our young friend, who retaliated by threatening him with the hoe.

Someone separated them before they could do each other any harm, and our young friend came to us so agitated that his hands were trembling. His teeth were clenched and he was bursting with fury.

Instead of arguing with him, I asked him to join us at dinner. It is difficult to be furious when eating, and this gave him a little time to cool down. After he had finished his dinner, I said,



Easwaran at San Francisco's Marina Green, 1970s.

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“What happened to all your flower language? What happened to all your love? Why didn’t you show him the universal love that you are capable of?”

He didn’t know what to answer. He said, “You tell me what happened.”

I said, “You are not used to people. You have never had the opportunity of living together with people who provoke you. You haven’t learned to grit your teeth, repeat the mantram, stand firm, and move closer to people when they provoke you. It takes a man to do this. To be angry, to take a spade and hit the other person — that is not worthy of a human being.”

He said, “How do you learn to do this?” “Oh,” I said, “by living with people like you!”

## Chipping away

For ordinary people like you and me, the solitary life is not particularly conducive to spiritual growth. In the sometimes painful give-and-take of life every day, you learn to draw upon the power released in meditation to love and support the people around you — even at the expense of your own comfort and convenience.

Meditation and selfless action go hand in hand. When we try to live more for others than for ourselves, this will deepen our meditation. When we deepen our meditation, more and more energy will be released with which we can help others.

Only when you have lowered all the barriers between yourself and others will there be no barrier between you and the Lord within. Deliberately, then, from the very first, you begin to chip away at those walls in consciousness. You do it in little ways, throughout the day, by trying to see the needs of others as clearly as your own and to act in harmony with them.

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When we purify ourselves by learning to be patient, by learning to forbear, we come at last to see the Lord hidden in our own heart and in the hearts of all.

This continuous awareness of unity is our native state. Mystics speak of it as the soul's true home. In the evolution of consciousness, it is not only the state of being from which we come, but also that to which we must one day return – not in some afterlife but here on earth – by discovering in our own consciousness our oneness with the rest of life.

### **Ready for the vision of God**

In order to do this, we don't have to change our religion. We don't have to go to another country. We don't have to leave our family. We don't have to throw up our job – unless it is at the expense of life. What is called for is a long, difficult, sometimes dangerous training of the mind.

If you are following the method of meditation that is associated with my name all over the world now – if you are using the Prayer of Francis of Assisi, or the first chapter of the Dhammapada of the Buddha, or the “Invocations” of Ansari of Herat, or “The Wonderful Effect of Divine Love” by Thomas à Kempis, or the last eighteen verses of the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, and you are able to drive those words deeper and deeper into your consciousness through years of regular, systematic, devoted practice, morning and evening, focusing all your attention on the passage and bringing your mind back when it wanders – then the day has to come when your concentration will be so focused on the inspirational passage that there will not be even a wisp of attention to wander about.

There won't be any distractions; there won't be any division of attention; you won't hear the barking of the dog or the

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mewing of the cat. For that moment, at least, the mind is still. When it is completely still, the mystics say, you are ready for the vision of God.

In the classical school of ancient Indian mysticism, to which I belong, it is only through an infinite act of grace that God reveals himself to us. All that you or I can do is to prepare the stage: to make our life as pure as we can, as selfless as we can, serving everyone around us and trying never to hold anything against anybody because of anything they may have done, knowingly or unknowingly.

That is what it means to extinguish self-will, and the extinction of self-will is the very basis of love. Most conflicts in personal relationships arise because of self-will; when self-will is extinguished, you have a tender romance with all life.

In Buddhism this is called *nirvana*, from *nir*, “out,” and *vana*, “to blow.” Self-will is blown out like the flame of a candle. When you are celebrating your children’s birthdays you say, “Now take a deep breath and blow all the candles out, asking for what you want in your heart.” That’s all right for children, but for older people who are celebrating their birthdays, I suggest that when you blow out your candles you say “May my self-will be blown out like this!”

## The One appearing as many

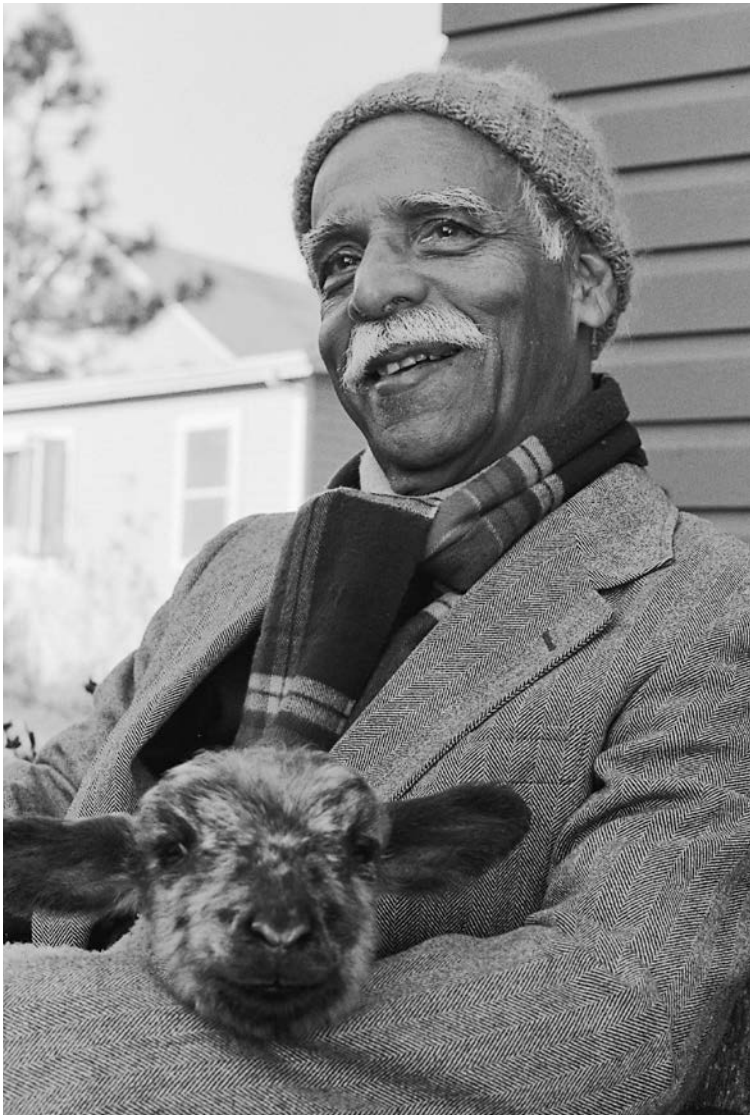
When we attain nirvana, we discover simultaneously that we and the universe are one. The world of multiplicity dissolves; the world of separateness falls away. We no longer see people as separate, and we no longer see any form of life as separate. We see everyone, every creature, as the One appearing to be many.

Afterwards, we order our life in such a way as to express

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this oneness. We come to have love for everybody, so our love is multiplied billions of times. When we hear of the people of other countries suffering, we feel as grieved as when those in our own country suffer. Everybody becomes our kith and kin.

One Western mystic says that when you have been looking at the sun for a long time, you will see the image of the sun wherever you look. Similarly, when you look at people, when you look at animals and birds, when you look at nature, the mountains and the seas, you will see the light of God everywhere. And you will conduct yourself accordingly, with love and respect always. 🌸



Easwaran at Ramagiri Ashram, 1980s.



Shanti meditation hall at Ramagiri Ashram.



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## Only God I Saw

*Baba Kuhi of Shiraz*

In the market, in the cloister – only God I saw.

In the valley and on the mountain – only God I saw.

Him I have seen beside me oft in tribulation;

In favor and in fortune – only God I saw.

In prayer and fasting, in praise and contemplation,

In the religion of the Prophet – only God I saw.

Neither soul nor body, accident nor substance,

Qualities nor causes – only God I saw.

I oped mine eyes and by the light of his face around me

In all the eye discovered – only God I saw.

Like a candle I was melting in his fire:

Amidst the flames outflashing – only God I saw.

Myself with mine own eyes I saw most clearly,

But when I looked with God's eyes – only God I saw.

I passed away into nothingness, I vanished,

And lo, I was the All-living – only God I saw.

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## No One but the Lord

Eknath Easwaran

In the Krishna tradition, there is a little story I like very much which illustrates the vision of unity. It is a story about Nārada, a sage who was deeply devoted to Sri Krishna. On this occasion, Nārada asked the Lord to tell him the deepest truth of the spiritual life. Sri Krishna has a rather playful way of answering these questions, and this time he just smiled mischievously and disappeared, leaving Nārada standing bewildered in the bustling street of a village he had never seen before.

Nārada was not one to be at a loss, but even he didn't know what to do. Was he still in heaven, or was he back on earth? He waited and waited for Sri Krishna to reappear, but there was no sign of him anywhere.

Finally, Nārada began to get hungry. In India it has been a tradition for thousands of years for householders to give food to wandering spiritual aspirants; it is a great blessing for the householder and the whole family. So Nārada took out his wooden bowl and went up to the nearest house to ask for a little food.

But when the door opened Nārada gave a start, for the woman who answered had Sri Krishna's eyes. Not only that, as she handed back the bowl, he was sure she gave him just the hint of a wink before she disappeared into the shadows of the house again and closed the door.

A little bewildered, Nārada went on to the next house, where a whole family was just sitting down to dinner. This time there was no wink from the lady of the house, but a little boy with



Easwaran before his puja table, Ramagiri Ashram.

those same eyes ran over to greet him and said a little too mischievously, “Sir, have you ever seen Sri Krishna? Can you sing us some of his praises?”

It was like that in every house. In one place it was an infant, in another a teenager, in a third the grandmother, but in every family Nārada visited, one of the family was the Lord.

At last he realized that for all the differences in age and appearance, there was no one in that village except the Lord, and in that instant of realization the village disappeared and Nārada was back with Sri Krishna again in the heavenly realm of Vaikuntha. 🌸

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# A Common Core in All of Us

Eknath Easwaran

Yesterday when I was taking our dog Muka for a walk I saw a jackrabbit in front of us seated on the road, full of confidence that none of us at Ramagiri would harm him. But seeing Muka, he became unsure and gave a couple of leaps, getting out of our way. Muka looked up at me as if to say, “Why does he have such abnormal legs? Why are the back two so much longer than the front ones?”

Muka looks upon his four legs of equal length as normal, and he measures the world from this point of view; anything not conforming to his dimensions is abnormal.

The jackrabbit is no different. Looking at the world from his vantage point, he would have said, “What strange legs your dog has – all equal length. How does he manage to hop?”



In the hills above Ramagiri Ashram, 1970s.

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Of course, from our point of view the rabbit's legs are just right for a rabbit and Muka's are just right for a dog.

Similarly, most of us live with people who have different opinions than ours. Everyone has different dimensions, and each walks or jumps forward in his own way; yet there is a common core in all of us.

Twelve years ago, when I had just arrived in America, everyone asked me, "How do you like it here?" I always replied, "Just as I liked it there." There are no differences between people, no matter whether they are in India, Africa, America, or Europe.

All our greatness comes from this common humanity, and when we constantly keep our eyes fixed on it, we discover the unity of life which is divine. 🌸



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## I Know That He Reveals Himself

*Saint Symeon the New Theologian*

I sit alone apart from all the world  
and see before me Him who transcends the world.  
I see Him and He sees me;  
I love Him and I believe that He loves me;  
I am nourished and satisfied only with His vision.  
United with Him I go beyond heaven.

All this I know beyond any doubt,  
but where my body is I do not know.

I know that He who is immovable descends;  
I know that He who is invisible appears to me;  
I know that He who transcends all creation  
takes me into Himself and hides me in His arms  
apart from all the world;  
and then I, small and mortal in this world,  
I see the Creator of the world within me  
and know that I can never die  
because I am within all life  
and all of life wells up in me.

He is in my heart, He is in heaven;  
both here and there He reveals Himself to me  
in equal glory.

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## The Whole World Is Your Own

*Sri Sarada Devi*

I tell you one thing –  
If you want peace of mind,  
do not find fault with others.  
Rather learn to see your own faults.  
Learn to make the whole world your own.  
No one is a stranger, my child;  
this whole world is your own.

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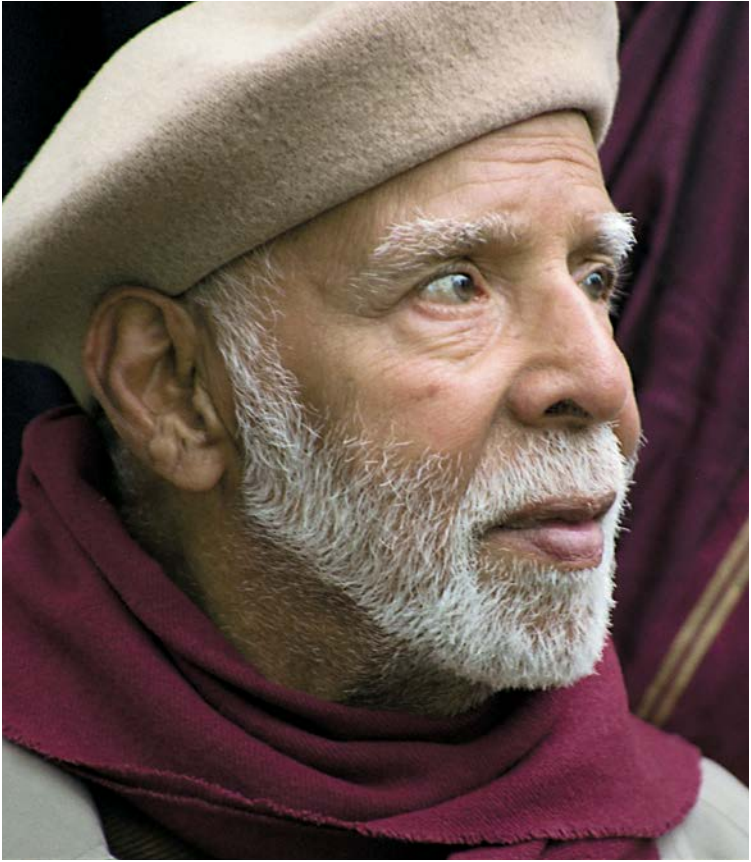
## When I Lose Myself in Thee

*Tukaram*

When thus I lose myself in Thee, my God,  
Then do I see, and know,  
That all Thy universe reveals Thy beauty,  
All living beings, and all lifeless things,  
Exist through Thee.

This whole vast world is but the form  
In which Thou showest us Thyself,  
Is but the voice  
In which Thyself Thou speakest unto us.

What need of words?  
Come, Master, come,  
And fill me wholly with Thyself.



Easwaran, 1990s.



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# Remove the Veil of Self-will

Eknath Easwaran

Many people during the last thirty years have said to me, “You tell us that the world is full of God. Why is it that we don’t see God? Why is it that we don’t hear God?” It is the mystic Hans Denck who says,

Men flee from Thee and say they cannot find Thee; they turn their backs and say they cannot see Thee; they stop their ears and say they cannot hear Thee.

It’s terrible language, but it’s true. It takes many, many years of practicing spiritual disciplines before the eye opens, the ear hears, the heart feels, and the whole of life sings with joy.

## A Sufi story

The Sufis have a very poetic metaphor. They say that self-will is a thick, almost impenetrable veil separating us from the unity of life and blinding us to the effects of our actions. When we push aside that veil of self-interest and identify ourselves with the life around us, we find the true meaning of our lives: we are here to give, to help, and to protect.

There is an old Sufi story in which an eager spiritual aspirant tells his teacher, “Oh, just let me at that veil! I’ll rip it open in no time!”

His teacher remonstrates: “I don’t think so. You may find this veil rather difficult to lift.”

“Why?” asks the student.

“Because you are the veil.”

This is everybody’s predicament. God does not hide behind a

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veil, the Sufis insist: we have covered our own eyes with veils. Don't plead with God to remove these veils, they say; work to remove the sense of separateness that isolates you from the rest of life. When every veil of separateness is down, then you will see God.

## Love turned around

All of us find ourselves a fascinating, satisfying subject to contemplate – until the results begin to accumulate. The effects are easier to see with someone else: the person who thinks about himself all the time, who can scarcely think about anything except in connection with his own needs, becomes the most wretched creature on earth.

Whenever we feel life is being unfair to us, whenever we hurt because people are not treating us right or paying us attention or giving us our due respect, nine times out of ten what is hurting is our self-will. An anonymous mystical document known as the *Theologica Germanica* says succinctly, “Nothing burns in hell except self-will.” No God has to punish us for being self-willed; self-will is its own punishment, its own hell.

I like to think of self-will as love turned around. Love is energy, and self-will is that energy focused on oneself. We can learn to free that energy, and when we do, our lives will fill with love, which is what living in heaven means.

## Faith in our values

In today's competitive climate, often those who are aggressive about imposing their will on others are labeled “successful.” But the accomplishments of such people are often sadly short-lived, while the damage they do themselves and others can be far-reaching. When self-will is excessive, we end up offending

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others, feeling offended, and lashing back, and that undoes everything worthwhile we might achieve.

People with little self-will, on the other hand, seldom get upset when life goes against them. They do not try to impose their way on others, or get agitated or depressed or defensive when people hold different views. Being intolerant of other views, Mahatma Gandhi used to say, is a sign that we don't have enough faith in our own. To get agitated and angry when opposed shows a certain insecurity. If we really believe what we believe, we will not be shaken when someone challenges it.

I try to practice that in all kinds of little ways. Every day, for example, I look at a very influential newspaper whose editorial viewpoint contradicts everything I stand for. And I enjoy it: the writing is often excellent, and the differences in perspective help me to understand opinions I would otherwise never hear. I can give full attention to opposite opinions, and learn from them, because my faith in spiritual values is unshakable.

The reason for this, of course, is that these are not just my values. They are timeless, and my faith in them comes from many centuries of experience. If somebody challenges what I say about heaven being within, I don't get upset. It is Jesus who said it, and he is quite capable of defending his words himself.

## Right knowing

The other day as we tried to leave a parking garage near the Berkeley campus I noticed a lot of spikes protruding from the asphalt, leveled at the car like lances in some medieval fortress. The sign warned, "Do Not Enter. Severe Tire Damage May Result."

From the looks of those spikes, I would say that was putting

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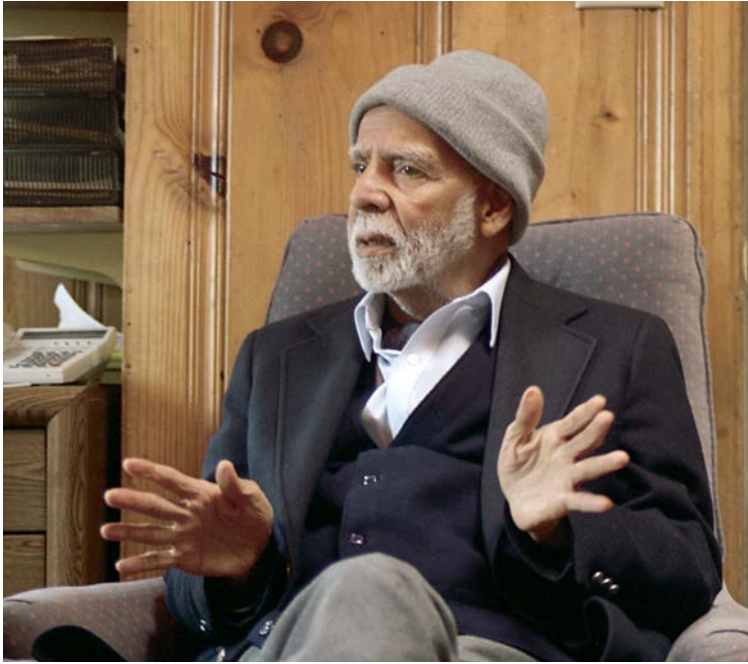
it mildly; our tires would probably have come out looking like ravioli. There is a sign like this inside us too: “Don’t Be Selfish. Severe Damage May Result – Spiritual, Emotional, Physical.”

When Jesus or Sri Krishna tells us not to retaliate or resort to unkind words, these are not copybook maxims intended only for Sunday pulpits. They are living laws. The more we indulge in unkind thinking, speaking, and behaving, the more damage we do ourselves. When you forgive, on the other hand—particularly when you forgive wrongs you have suffered in emotionally charged relationships – you are doing much more than repairing those relationships; you are discharging pent-up resentments and hostilities which are often responsible for severe physical problems.

People used to ask me, “Does it help others if I pray for them?” I replied, “I don’t know how much it helps others, but it certainly will help you.” This, Sri Krishna says, is right knowing: seeing the Lord in all, despite any differences that seem to separate us.

## Teaching the mind to forgive

Yet true forgiveness is no simple matter of shaking hands and murmuring, “Forget it, old boy.” Careful files are being kept inside. Little grievances, injuries that don’t deserve a second thought, are being recorded deep in consciousness, marked “Store Indefinitely. Top Secret.” These are the episodes that come up in dreams, cause us conflicts, and often push us to erupt in unexpected bouts of temper. In very deep meditation you will actually catch sight of some of these hang-ups. And you gasp: that grudge you have been feeding all these years has been responsible for emotional sore spots and health problems you never suspected.



Easwaran in the BCM office, 1990s.

I need hardly remind you how hard it is to start letting down old, ingrained hostile defenses. Experience, we believe, does not teach us that others are trustworthy; it teaches us that we had better watch our flanks. The memory of past letdowns can weigh down any sensitive human being, making trust an elusive commodity to acquire. Worst of all, when negative memories cast a shadow of mistrust over our relationships, we lack the vitality we need to withdraw our attention and act with kindness, as if those shadows were not there. That is why any effective reformation of character has to start with reforming the thought process itself.

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## Restore perspective

Here the power of the holy name makes itself felt. Each time your thoughts start to wander down dark alleyways of the past, by drawing on the holy name you can call them back and point their feet in the direction you really want them to go. Gradually, with practice, your thoughts will wander much less frequently; in time, they may even forget the address of those alleyways they once haunted.

Repeating the holy name is a powerful way to harness a very natural tendency of the human mind: to brood. Every compulsion gets its grip from this tendency. The mind takes a trifling remark or incident, no bigger than a limp balloon, and starts to inflate it by thinking about it over and over and over, blowing it up with its attention until it fills our consciousness and we cannot think about anything else.

When the mind starts this blow-up routine, the holy name restores your perspective by letting out the air. Every time the mind pumps, the holy name pricks open a little hole and lets some of your attention get free. The balloon may not collapse immediately – after all, an emotion like anger or resentment has powerful lungs. But right from the first, it will not get so obsessively large, which means you have introduced a measure of free choice. Next time you will find your freedom even greater.

## Our vision clears

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. Put plainly, obstacles arise because we want to impose our way, our

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self-will, on others, and they want to impose their self-will on us. Seeing this clearly goes a long way toward releasing forgiveness; as Voltaire said, “To understand all is to forgive all.”

When we see the state of mind beneath behavior, we realize with great compassion that behind a sharp remark, an unkind glance, a rankling insult, an outburst of anger, lie a thousand contributing causes over which that person has very little control, extending back perhaps for many years.

When a fellow has grown up in a little farming town, gone to Pioneer High School, spent two years in the Peace Corps, had such and so friends and such and so experiences, he is likely to get provoked by certain words and actions; that is what makes him who he is. Then the question is not “Why does he act like that?” but “Why did I not understand?”

Praise and blame are irrelevant here. You do not romanticize or close your eyes to defects or mistakes. You simply understand, which means that you do not judge. If a blind person knocks you off balance, do you get angry? If she fails to respond to the look on your face, do you call her insensitive? The vast majority of people are very much like that, blind to each other’s needs.

They do not mean to be unkind; they simply do not see. And instead of judging them or conniving at them, we learn to help them open their eyes. It not only enables them to change; we transform ourselves. “What is here is also there”: in understanding ourselves, we understand others; in forgiving others, we forgive ourselves.

## **Keep faith with people**

The Sufis say that we should see the Beloved in everyone we love. In all our relationships, though we are aware of the

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inadequacies at the present, we should never lose sight of the fact that the Beloved is hidden in the hearts of all. This is what enables us to keep faith with people, to trust and support them, and to oppose them tenderly when necessary to keep them from making a serious mistake.

When this skill of love becomes second nature, even when someone is cruel to us, our eyes will not be diverted from the divine core of his personality. This does not mean playing Pollyanna or closing our eyes to wrong behavior. It means simply that we will never lose faith in any person's capacity to change.

Without that faith, people lose faith in themselves, and without faith in yourself it is not possible to improve. Everyone deserves our respect, for all are children of an all-compassionate God. This is the most effective way to help others remember their true character.

## **Challenging predicaments**

Still, practicing this kind of love is not easy. After I give a talk people sometimes come up to me distraught and tell me: "But you don't know the atmosphere in my home! You haven't met my office mates!"

I hasten to assure them, "You don't have to give me the details. I wasn't raised in a cave." I grew up in a large joint family, where we couldn't escape rubbing shoulders with one another at every turn. Later I worked on campuses with thousands of students, and must have attended hundreds of meetings where faculty members from all departments often differed with each other with passionate conviction.

I am perfectly well aware that in every context there can be people who are difficult – every bit as difficult as we ourselves





Easwaran greeting ashram children after school, 1980s.

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can be at times. Wherever we turn in life, we are liable to run into challenging predicaments.

When I was teaching on university campuses, however, I was also practicing meditation and trying to translate the teachings of the mystics into my daily life. Gradually I learned to cease looking upon challenges as difficulties, and began to see tense situations as opportunities to put my growing love to use. We can do this everywhere; the family context is perfect.

### Daily exercises in love

In every family, for example, there is likely to be somebody with a bit of Jonathan Swift. Swift, you know, had a sardonic tongue and a rather black sense of humor; he is said to have worn mourning on his birthday. This sort of thing has an inhibiting effect on everyone, and naturally enough, when the Jonathan of our own family enters the room, others may try to make themselves scarce.

Not the person who is trying to take love seriously. She learns to come up with a genuine smile and says, “Come in, Jonathan! I’ve been looking forward to seeing you.” To herself she can add in a whisper, “I need the opportunity to deepen my patience.”

As we become more aware that the same spark of divinity is in all of us, we will find opportunities everywhere to make that divinity more evident. We won’t see anybody as an enemy; we will see everybody as a friend. Every event, however difficult or potentially threatening, can be used to help carry out what the mystics call “the will of the Lord”: to love, to forgive, to be kind.

In other words, these are daily exercises, very much like aerobics. You don’t stop when your heart rate gets up to 85.

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You say, “My target rate is 120,” and you keep at it until you get there. When your heart is accustomed to 120, you can start aiming for 130, then for 140. Where physical conditioning is concerned, everybody accepts this process.

### **More and more capacity**

It is exactly the same process for increasing patience. The resting rate for patience is zero: you say, “I don’t have any patience at all. I blow my stack at the slightest provocation!” I commiserate with such people by patting them on the back and reminding them, “That is where everybody starts.”

But as you learn to meditate, you get more and more capacity to draw on. After a while, when Jonathan goes out of his way to provoke you, you find you can bear it cheerfully for half an hour. With continuing practice, you reach the point where you can get through an entire Saturday morning without losing control. From seven-thirty until noon, you are so patient that you begin to relish your show of self-mastery.

### **Our nature is love**

After lunch – wisely, I would say – you make yourself scarce again, because your patience has run dry. But if you keep at it with the same diligence in every arena of personal affairs, the great day arrives when you can be patient around poor Jonathan throughout the weekend. He does his level best to provoke you, but you say to yourself, “Oh, no, you don’t! Those days are over. Nowadays I can be patience itself.”

There is a remarkable statement in mysticism which I am now going to translate into the language of learning to love. Through sheer exercise, over a long, long period, we do not just love Jonathan or Josephine; we become love itself. Our love

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radiates to anyone who comes within our orbit; we simply lose the knack of doing otherwise.

It does not matter whether the person seated beside us has been unpleasant to us for years, perhaps has even opposed us; that is immaterial. What matters is that our very nature now is love. At all times, in every situation, we are at our best with everybody. This is the answer to our most profound prayers.

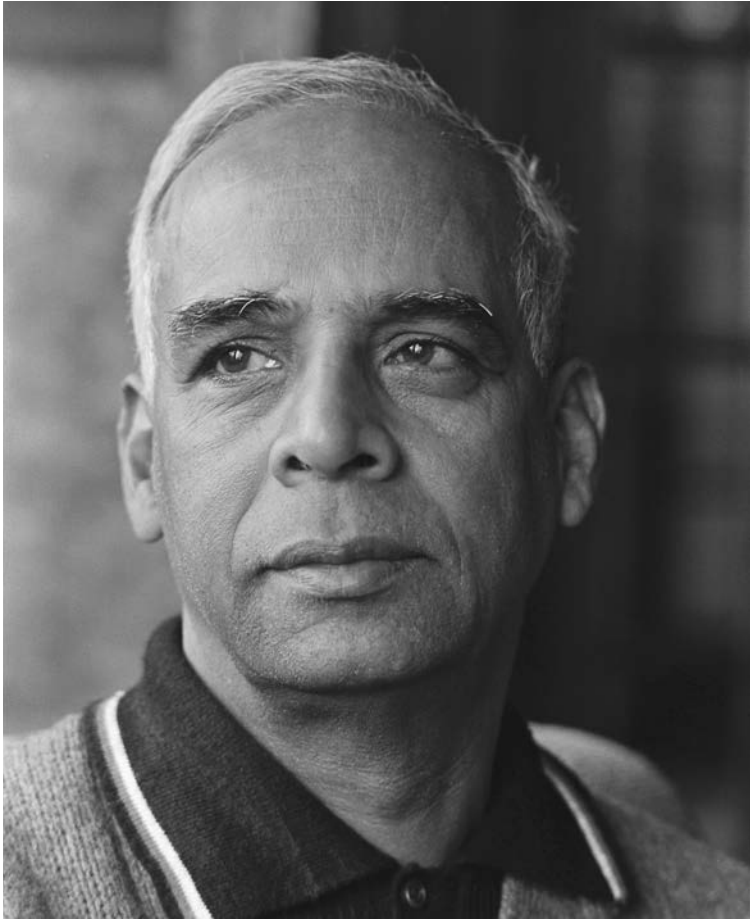
### The veils fall away

Eradicating self-will is the means by which we realize the supreme goal of the spiritual life. This is what all the great mystics have done, and done completely, through years of strenuous effort.

In the words of Meister Eckhart, “As long as the soul has not thrown off all her veils, however thin, she is unable to see God. Any medium, even a hair’s breadth, between the body and the soul stops the actual union.”

In Sufism, the mystical tradition of Islam, it is said that with every stage in deepening meditation, you remove one veil. The lover, the spiritual aspirant, is yearning to see his divine Beloved. One veil falls away – the physical – and you can see the Self a little more clearly. The mental veil falls away and you see more clearly still. Finally, when the ego falls – the veil of self-will – there is the Beloved, revealed in all the beauty and all the love we have been longing for.

It’s a wonderful paradox: it is when you have seen God in your own heart, in the depths of meditation, that you see him everywhere, even with your eyes wide open. In the great climax of meditation, when self-will is extinguished and the mind becomes still, you see the whole universe as the manifestation of God’s love. 🌸



Easwaran, 1960s.

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## Community Story

# The One in the Hearts of All

It was so easy to see the divinity in my newborn child, but the abrupt onset of unremitting care-providing in an already full life was like boot camp! Striving (on very little sleep) to cheerfully accept every mood, to adequately feed, effectively soothe, unreservedly forgive and encourage, and wisely establish safe, reasonable limits for the curious little humans God entrusted to me were serious, daily tests of my love, patience and determination. But, little by little those arduous tasks taught me to consciously, and with increasing self-discipline, practice an unconditional love.



### A squall of conflict

It was that kind of love I struggled to evoke during an important community meeting when, in an unforeseen squall of conflict, a friendship capsized. To our mutual surprise, my good friend and I found ourselves suddenly over our heads emotionally. Up until this moment we had worked evenmindedly on our complex project, but now, in fear and anger we pulled away and postured; each had become an OTHER. Blinded by fear and anger, I saw a calculating saboteur when I looked at her. In her eyes, I appeared newly ruthless, willing to throw her overboard to reach my preferred outcome.

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## Work to do

A capable support team offered to take us through an established conflict resolution process. My friend was ready to jump right in. But I knew I had work to do first. I asked instead for the process to begin the next morning, and immediately started my mantram. I walked with my mantram. I wrote my mantram. I embraced it throughout the long night. And when I meditated early next morning, I meditated on “Living in Wisdom.”

Using the Holy Name and the passage, I was able to remember that the same Blessed Mother who lives in me lives continually in my friend (and in all of us) even when we are momentarily blinded to that fact. Quieting the self-righteous voice in my mind, I came to our meeting with a humble heart, ready to listen with love, remembering that the outcome of our community was in the Lord’s hands, but the ability to tend my relationships with love is always in mine. This reliable method has never failed me since.

I’ve noticed that when my anger rises, whether it’s within my own family or about events in the world, it comes with a story I’m telling myself about the other person and (often) their bad intentions. It’s imperative that I silence that story. For that, I rely heavily on my mantram.

To artfully navigate current political conversations and family I must remind myself to slow down, be one-pointed, especially when I might be entering either a media or

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sensory mine field. Those stressors can render me insensitive to the needs of others and vulnerable to anger. Slowing down, working towards a balanced spiritual schedule, and giving less and less attention to life's minor aversions and irritants all help me remember the One hidden in the hearts of all.

### **One mantram, one passage at a time**

Relying on the love and guidance of Sri Easwaran at day's end through the Easwaran Digital Library I can always re-collect myself and remember the goal. It helps me immeasurably to hear Easwaran say things like "I have lost my ability to be disappointed in anybody." Why, if illumined beings see the Lord in us, and view all as one whole fabric of Reality, well, I can strive for that too – one mantram, one passage, at a time.

— Rosemary, a member of our Affiliate Program

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**The Easwaran Digital Library offers a selection of video and audio talks from Easwaran, curated to cover his main themes and chosen from all decades of his teaching career. Sign up for a free subscription at: [www.bmcm.org/join-edl](http://www.bmcm.org/join-edl).**



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## Community Story

# Detaching the Velcro of Self-will

Retreats in Tomales provide such a supported environment for diving deep into the eight points that a major focus of the last day is to devise a gentle strategy for re-entry. After the July weeklong retreat, I planned to focus on a simple behavior — using the mantram more faithfully at little daily points of transition.



The retreat week also stimulated a perception change. Maybe retreats aren't just a battery recharge. Maybe the householder life to which I was returning is the best opportunity for sadhana. What if every loop of that connected life is fodder for working off the hooks of self-will that cling like Velcro obstructing the spiritual path?

To give myself a gentle head start, I left Tomales at dawn and leaned into the curves along Route 1 to San Francisco Airport. The beauty and slowness of the drive eased me back into the hubbub. I mentally whispered an extra burst of mantrams when I found myself starting to feel giddy and smug at having beaten the traffic.

The airport departure board signaled a delay in my flight. Mantrams. Oh boy! Seven hours to put others first — others who had endured my away message for the past week. The airport internet was blessedly slow, and I got in extra mantrams between each email. On distracting

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messages, I hit “unsubscribe” rather than “delete,” and have continued this red-pen activity in the weeks since.

Saying mantrams while boarding the plane, I noticed where my fellow travelers in the seats surrounding my aisle pew placed their carry-ons, storing that information for use six hours later when I could hand out their luggage during deplaning.

### **Selfless work and the eight points**

I used the plane time to write two letters of recommendation requested in my email backlog — focusing not just on the instrumental actions of the person needing recommendation, but describing details that show how the Lord within manifests in their lives. I used my electronic red pen to revise a paper that a former student had sent, and used marginal notes to notice how much he’d grown. Over the years, this student had asked for advice about more than his academic and career progress, and after our conversations, had taken up meditation and the eight-point program.

Earplugs enabled my evening meditation on the plane. Altogether, this combination of selfless work with one-pointed attention, slowing down, and meditation created energy, and the many more mantrams kept the vitality from being wasted on churning mental roiling.

Despite the late night arrival, I awoke five minutes before the alarm, and between morning meditation and breakfast, spent an hour writing. After that, the first day back felt reactive — of course! — but that felt right — a chance to reconnect with the world, just as reconnecting after

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meditation gives us a chance to practice the other seven points, inspired by quiet connection with the Lord within.

Energizing extra mantrams helped stop the prana leaks for the next couple weeks. Then, perhaps because of all the sensate shopping I still do with my eyes and ears, my days began feeling disjointed, and my meditation felt rambling and distracted. In desperation, I beefed up the mantrams at every moment I could muster, and re-energized my painfully disordered meditation. Hard-won equanimity started to return.

I think I'll follow Easwaran's advice to take on a samskara to get another prana boost to invest in meditation, and I await my local satsang weekend retreat coming up. These are nourishment. The fodder for detaching the restrictive Velcro of self-will is exercising the eight points in the playground of the householder life.

— Kurt, a member of our Affiliate Program

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**For more on Easwaran's eight-point program of spiritual living, see [www.bmcm.org/learn](http://www.bmcm.org/learn). For more on satsangs, or fellowship groups, see [www.bmcm.org/community](http://www.bmcm.org/community). Our calendar of retreat dates is at the back of this journal and at [www.bmcm.org/programs](http://www.bmcm.org/programs).**

*Newly available as audiobooks on Audible.com:*

**The Mantram Handbook: A Practical Guide to  
Choosing Your Mantram & Calming Your Mind**

**Original Goodness: A Commentary on the Beatitudes**

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## Community Story

### An Encounter with the Divine in All

On an anniversary trip to San Francisco with my husband, we were out seeing the sights of the city. We had just left Ghirardelli Square where we'd had a long stroll and I had bought the requisite bar of chocolate to take home and blissfully enjoy later. We boarded a cable car (another tourist staple) and settled into a spot near the back along with a rather cramped group of locals as well as out-of-towners like us. Although most people were quietly engaged in their own thoughts or in the scenes outside the window, I happened to catch the gaze of an older man a few feet away who bore the typical signs of homelessness or mental health struggles — disheveled and unkempt, wearing multiple layers of clothing on a very warm day, mumbling to himself.

He gave me a big, mostly toothless smile and loudly asked me “What’s your zodiac sign?” Before starting this practice, I might have inwardly recoiled or willfully turned away. But through my practice — and the grace of my teacher — I was slowed down just enough to push past this initial reaction and let the words of my passages arise, especially the “Discourse on Good Will” from the Sutta Nipata, allowing me to experience a feeling of our connectedness instead of separateness. I smiled right back, eager and responsive to whatever conversation would unfold.

I replied, “What do you think my sign is?”

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This touched off a long series of guesses on his part, intermingled with his commentaries: “You know, Aquarius does this . . .” and “My brother’s a Leo and he . . .,” followed by my replies: “Oh really?” and “That is so interesting!” During our exchange I had been noticing the reactions of people around us. At first most of them deliberately averted their eyes, physically shifted their bodies away from the man, or looked at me nervously or incredulously like “Why are you even talking to this guy???”

Very gradually their reactions began to shift. They were actually looking at and listening to us, and soon many of them were breaking into smiles over this fellow’s enthusiasm and the playful conversation that was unfolding. The tension was melting away and maybe even some of their initial notions about the situation.

We were coming to our stop. My new friend finally guessed my sign — Pisces — and with delight he exclaimed “I am that too!” How thoroughly appropriate. As I moved to exit the car, he held out his hand and asked for money. I gave him the only thing I had with me at the time — that Ghirardelli chocolate bar — and offered a silent prayer of thanks for this encounter with the Divine in all those who were sharing that moment.

— Sandy, a member of our Affiliate Program

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To read the “Discourse on Good Will” go to [www.bmcm.org/passages](http://www.bmcm.org/passages) or see Easwaran’s anthology *God Makes the Rivers to Flow*.



Members of our Affiliate Internship Program with Christine Easwaran.

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## The One Appearing as Many

*Excerpt from the Shvetashvatara Upanishad*

*Translated by Easwaran*

May the Lord of Love, who projects himself  
Into the universe of myriad forms  
Through maya, from whom all beings come,  
To whom all beings finally return,  
May he grant us the grace of wisdom.

He is the fire and the sun, and the moon  
And the stars. He is the air and the sea,  
And the creator Prajapati.

He is this boy, he is that girl; he is  
This man, he is that woman, and he is  
This old man, too, tottering on his staff.  
His face is seen everywhere.

He is the blue bird, he is the green bird  
With red eyes; he is the thundercloud, and  
He is the seasons and the seas; he has  
No beginning, he has no end. He is  
The source from whom all the worlds evolve.

From his divine power of maya comes  
Forth this magical show of name and form,  
Of you and me, which casts the spell of pain  
And pleasure. When we pierce through the magic,  
We see the One who appears as many.

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From the BCMC Family Program, July 2019.







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# The World is Full of God

Eknath Easwaran

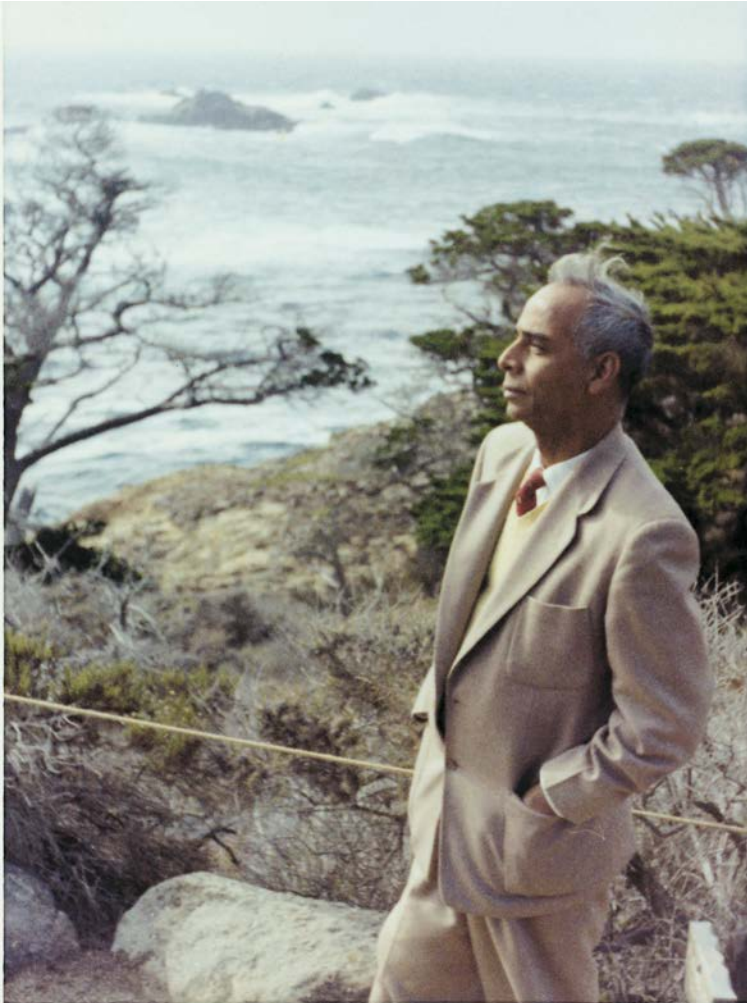
When we are united with the Lord, every created thing, from the farthest star to the atoms in our bodies, is our kith and kin. The mystic Jāfar exclaims:

I have joined my heart to Thee: all that exists art Thou.  
O Lord, beloved of my heart, Thou art the home of all;  
Where indeed is the heart in which Thou dost not dwell? . . .  
From earth below to the highest heaven, from heaven to  
deepest earth,  
I see Thee wherever I look: all that exists art Thou.

Remember William Blake looking at the sun and seeing a choir of angels singing *holy, holy, holy*? The whole of creation is singing; if we cannot hear it, it is simply because we are asleep.

When I was growing up at the feet of my grandmother, though I loved her passionately, I understood very little of her perspective. My attention was elsewhere, on Shakespeare and Dickens and the “Ode to a Nightingale”; I couldn’t hear what her life was proclaiming every instant – in the simple words of Angela of Foligno, almost the same as those of the Gita, “the whole world is full of God.”

There is no barrier between us and this realization except self-will. That is all that keeps us thinking that we are separate from the whole. The more we love, the less our self-will – and the less subject we are to time and death.



Easwaran, 1960s.



Easwaran in the dining room at Ramagiri Ashram, 1970s.

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## The whole universe is our home

All of us have moments when we forget ourselves in helping others. In those moments of self-forgetfulness, we step out of ourselves: we really cease, if only for an instant, to be a separate person.

Those are moments of immortality, right on earth. Stretch them out until they fill the day and you will no longer be living in yourself alone; you will live in everyone. And St. John of the Cross reminds us, “We live in what we love.” If you love the Lord in all, if you live in the Lord in all, what is there to die when the body dies?

On her deathbed, St. Thérèse of Lisieux was asked what she thought heaven would be like. Thérèse replied in her gentle way that she couldn’t imagine it would be so very different. “Oh, I know I’ll see God. But as for being in his presence, I couldn’t be more there than I am here.”

Perfect words. When the little prison of the ego has been left behind, there is no longer any real difference between “there” and “here.” We no longer live in a separate body, a separate little personality. As Shankara says, the whole universe is our home.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cassian". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'C' that loops back.

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# Meditation Retreats

In these troubled times, many of us yearn to create a bright and hopeful future for our children and our children's children. But is it possible? Eknath Easwaran assures us, Yes. When we go deep into meditation we tap into the source of love and wisdom within us. We become over time a positive force in the world.

Our immersive BMCM retreats in Tomales, California, help you absorb Easwaran's wise teachings, learn and practice the meditation method that he developed, and experience the transformative lifestyle that unfolds from the practice of passage meditation.

## **Introductory Weekend Retreats:**

October 4–6, 2019; March 6–8, June 12–14,  
September 25–27, 2020

## **Young Adult Weekend Retreats: (20s & 30s)**

November 1–3, 2019; April 17–19, November 13–15, 2020

## **Returnee Weekend Retreats:**

November 8–10, 2019; January 31–February 2,  
August 28–30, November 6–8, 2020

## **Weeklong Retreats:**

October 12–18, 2019; March 28–April 3, May 2–8,  
July 11–17 (Affiliates & Cohorts), August 15–21,  
October 3–9, 2020

## **Family Weekend:**

August 1–2, 2020

## **Senior Half-Week Retreats:**

March 13–17, June 19–23, September 11–15, 2020

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# Online Programs

If you'd like to connect from home, join us for an online program. We strive to live out Easwaran's teachings with a slowed-down and one-pointed atmosphere.

## **Introductory Webinars:**

January 25, May 16, 2020

## **Returnee Online Workshops:**

November 16, 2019; February 22, November 21, 2020

## **Learning and Using the Eight Points – Online Course:**

October 10–November 20, 2020 (6 weeks)

We offer a sliding scale and scholarships for all our programs. Some online programs are free of charge.

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I don't have to close my eyes  
in meditation to see God.  
I see nothing else.

And I see, at the same time,  
that not only every human  
being but every living creature,  
the mountains, the rivers, the  
seas, the skies, the forests  
and the earth, are all one  
indivisible whole.

— *Eknath Easwaran*



P. O. Box 256  
Tomales, CA 94971  
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