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Body, Mind & Spirit

Meditation: A Complete Audio Guide
Eknath Easwaran
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The theme of this audio book is simple: “you are what you think.” As a former professor of English and a practitioner of the ancient wisdoms of India, the author incorporates the sacred and the secular, Eastern and Western religions and literature, and thirty years of experience in order to offer a practical way of approaching meditation. Whether seeking physical benefits or mental, listeners will find this eight-point program easy to use; theoretically, it takes only thirty minutes per day.

The author’s goal is not to change anyone’s faith, but to teach everyone how to use meditation within their chosen faith. Drawing from sources as diverse as the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, The Shema, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A. Kempis, Chapters 1 and 16 of *The Dhammapada* of the Buddha, selections from *The Bhagavad Gita*, and the teachings of the Sufi Master Ansari of Herat, Easwaran makes every attempt to help individuals find positive teachings that reinforce the world’s major religious traditions.

Without any fanfare, the author uses only his voice to explain the precepts of meditation to the willing listener. His delivery is sonorous, humorous, warm, and mildly hypnotic. His goal is for the novice to “be comfortable enough to forget your body, but not so comfortable that you become drowsy.” To that end, he suggests setting aside one spot in the house for meditation in order to associate calm with that room.

Easwaran, who was born in India, has written and translated dozens of books on spirituality, meditation, and world mysticism. He founded the Blue Mountain Center of Meditation and gives classes on the practice in the San Francisco Bay Area. This audio guide was first published as a book in 1978 and has sold 200,00 copies worldwide, without advertising.

The author’s eight steps to a calmer, more peaceable lifestyle are: meditation, repetition of the mantram, slowing down, one-pointed attention, training the senses, putting others first, reading in world mysticism, and spiritual companionship. Each step is designed to help the

practitioner slow down, become more mindful, unify consciousness, and deepen concentration. The basic tenet of meditation is “we are what we meditate on.” The mantram should be selected carefully and repeated through each of the eight steps, during the thirty-minute morning meditation, and throughout the day as need arises. According to the author, “The mantram works to steady the mind, and all these emotions are power running against you which the mantram can harness and put to work.”

This audio guide offers helpful advice, practical wisdom, and a simple approach to better living. It also includes a separate short handbook with excellent notes on names and terms in addition to passages for meditation.

Pam Kingsbury