

Death and Dying

How to use these resources:

1. Identify the reading studies you would like to use.
2. Read the DVD talk summaries and select the ones which you think would work best with your chosen reading studies. You may want to select only one 15-minute section depending on the length of time you have allotted for watching the talk. Preview the entire talk to decide which 15-minute section to use.

Reading study options:

These reading selections have been chosen from several books by Easwaran. They focus on several of Easwaran's important concepts about death, such as:

- The purpose of death is to overcome it
- It is necessary to overcome our fear of death
- Death is a bridge and we can help the dying cross that bridge through our own spiritual practices
- Repetition of the mantram is of utmost import at the time of death
- Death is a process.

Essence of the Upanishads

Note: If you are using Dialogue with Death, you will find the readings in the chapters and sections in italics at the end of each listing.

198–201 "There is another very personal implication" – "work out our karma and learn to master our desires." (7 paragraphs, *Chapter 10: Death & Dreaming*, section: *The Last Great Change*)

201–203 “Just as we choose our body” – “the school has to put up with him.” (4 paragraphs, *Chapter 10: Death & Dreaming, section: The Last Great Change*)

211–214 “On the vast stage of maya” – “and in that giving is more joy than the world knows.” (7 paragraphs, *Chapter 10: Death & Dreaming, section: Death and Immortality*)

256–257 “There is no greater gift than this” – “Lead me from death to immortality.” (5 paragraphs, *Chapter 12: The Lesson of the Lilac, section: “In the Midst of Life”*)

The Mantram Handbook

Note: The page numbers are from the fifth edition 2011. In earlier editions, you will find these readings in Chapter 9: The Mantram at the Time of Death.

131–132 “In India, as in other traditions” – “it would be the ‘I’ thought.” (4 paragraphs, *section: The Mantram at the Moment of Death*)

132–135 “The process of death as described” – “is not interrupted even when the physical body dies.” (5 paragraphs, *section: The Process of Death*)

136–138 “Perhaps it would not be out of place” – “with peace and courage in our hearts.” (6 paragraphs, *section: Reincarnation*)

The Bhagavad Gita for Daily Living, Volume 2

92–93 “These verses are a quiet statement” – “that draws us back into separate existence.” (4 paragraphs)

104–106 “In a village in India” – “and go on home.” (4 paragraphs)

106–109 “A decade or so ago” – “aware of the Lord who dwells within.” (8 paragraphs)

The Bhagavad Gita for Daily Living, Volume 3

96–98 “Once you attain the Self” – “I shall not make the final crossing into nirvāna.” (7 paragraphs)

446–448 “This promise of eternal life” – “take on a new body and start afresh.” (8 paragraphs)

Video Talk Options with Summaries:

4: The Mystic Vision, Part II: *A New Year’s Message*

- * Encouragement to use our time carefully spending our leisure time with more and more attention to our spiritual practices.
- * The most important thing we can do in life is to dedicate our New Year and the years to come to the discovery of the supreme truth that the Lord of Love is present in all of us. Through the practice of passage meditation and the allied disciplines, we can remove all doubts about our ability to give and receive love.

7: Real-Life Stories of Transcendence, Part I: *The True Spirit of Worship*

- * *Yajna*: “ an act directed to the welfare of others done without desiring any return for it whether of a temporal or spiritual nature.”
- * Use the pain and difficulties we experience as a way to deepen our spirituality for the benefit of all. Such offerings help us when we are in difficulties or in dire straits – physically, mentally or emotionally.
- * As we leave the world we want to leave it a little better for generations to come. If we occupy our minds with something much, much bigger than ourselves, as Easwaran states, we will be giving great service to humanity.

9: The Noblest Life, Part II: *The Life of the Buddha*

- * The story of the Buddha’s last days.
- * “ ...this jacket will become tattered one day and will have to be thrown away.”

* Though he will no longer be physically present with us, he reassures us that he will always be with us “because the Self that lives in my heart is the same Self who lives in the heart of all. ”

13: Finding Immortality Within, Part I: *The City of Brahman*

* Passage: “The City of Brahman”

* The death of our bodies “is a very small matter.”

* It is of urgent importance that we learn who we really are – know what is within – in the lotus of the heart. Through unifying our desires into one great desire, the door opens and we will be granted the ability to realize the Self.

* Through the love that shines through us, “you will be like a flower, bearing fruit” and will be a force for harmony and goodness in the world.

19: Facing Life's Toughest Challenges, Part II: *Death & Immortality*

* The spiritual perspective of death: all of us are going to die, that we are, in effect, born to die.

* What happens when we die? How can we go beyond death to discover a changeless foundation for our lives?

* Use your understanding of death, not to be afraid, but to live life at your best.

21: The Buddha on Life & Nirvana, Part I: *Stages of Life*

* The stages of life humans go through and how we can progress in our understanding of human life and our life purpose.

* Old age and death will eventually come to all. As we grow spiritually we prepare for this transition and come to accept it. Once we conquer our fear of death, “the death of fear takes place.”

32: Ease & Disease, Part II: *Charles the Cat*

* Because we do not understand death, “we don't remember that it is waiting around the corner.” When we start to question “Where has he/she gone?” we are on the brink of beginning to gain wisdom and to develop a sense of urgency in understanding death.

* Remember every day that our bodies will one day have to be shed and that we should work diligently to transcend death for ourselves and for all those around us.

* Put great effort into working on “what you can’t help taking with you.” When we transform our thoughts and actions gradually – systematically and enthusiastically – through our eight-point program practice, many of our negative tendencies and potencies will be greatly lessened as we depart this life and move on to the next.