**Name**: Federico A. Smith

**Date**: 04-14-25

**Cohort**: (Francom, French, McMahan)

*In what follows, reflect on your learning and personal growth at this point in our course. Consider this week’s readings, multimedia sources, presentations, discussions, activities, etc. To your best ability attempt to integrate these experiences into our own developing understanding of the ‘Good Life’.*

In the India chapter Weiner explores the country’s deeply spiritual landscape, highlighting how people seek happiness through introspection and detachment from the busy streets of India. One of the main experiences he speaks of throughout the chapter is his time spent at an ashram, a place many believe offers a path to peace and enlightenment, which could lead to happiness. However, does the ashram itself hold any special power, or is it simply a space where individuals feel forced to do the work of inner transformation.

I think that the real benefit of the ashram experience comes not from the place, but from the practices that it encourages. Unless one internalizes these practices and continues them outside the protected walls of the ashram, any happiness gained will be fleeting. The temporary bliss of the ashram fades quickly if it's not supported by genuine belief and consistent practice. This brings into question the necessity of the ashram itself, perhaps it is not the place that matters, but the discipline it can create. I think that the pursuit of happiness through spiritual practice depends on personal commitment, not just a change in location.