

ENTERING THE SACRED SPACE

1. *Becoming conscious of the self*
2. *Observing from your position as soul*
3. *Connecting with the Divine*

OBSERVING FROM YOUR POSITION AS SOUL

The second step in entering the sacred space deals with what you do with your soul awareness – how you behave in your day-to-day life. Take the role of an observer and observe the happenings in your life from your position as soul. Kṛṣṇa describes this in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (5.8–9):

A person in the divine consciousness, although engaged in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving about, sleeping and breathing, always knows within himself that he actually does nothing at all. Because while speaking, evacuating, receiving, or opening or closing his eyes, he always knows that only the material senses are engaged with their objects and that he is aloof from them.



—❖❖❖ PRACTICE BEING LIKE A MOUNTAIN ❖❖❖—

How can we become “a person in the divine consciousness”? Śukadeva Gosvāmī gives us a suitable meditation:

Just as devotees whose minds are absorbed in the Personality of Godhead remain peaceful even when attacked by all sorts of dangers, the mountains in the rainy season were not at all disturbed by the repeated striking of the rain-bearing clouds.

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 10.20.15)

Here’s how to do this meditation:

1. Relax your body and mind – using *prāṇāyāma* or deep breathing or whatever works for you.
2. Evoke the picture of a mountain in your mind. Look at its beauty, its peaks, valleys, and vegetation. It’s starting to rain, then raining harder. A torrent of water hits the mountain, but it remains undisturbed. Now bring your body into the image. Your head is the mountain’s peak, your shoulders and arms its sides, your torso the middle, and your legs the firm base. Even though the rain of your life circumstances is hitting you, you remain peaceful like the mountain that remains stable in any weather. The mountain is unaffected by passing clouds, so you are not affected by passing emotions and thoughts.
3. Stay in this awareness for a while. Observe what it feels like, and try to engrave the experience on your mind.

COMING TO A MOUNTAIN POSITION

Connect with this image and the awareness it engenders in your daily life. Connect with the strength and stability of the soul. Withdraw your consciousness from the many things going on in the world outside or in your mind and understand, simply, “I’m an eternal soul.” From that perspective you will see the world in a new light.

Learn to tolerate your life’s ups and downs. Whatever the great wave of life carries into your world is coming to you because of mercy and your karma. These events provide excellent and necessary learning opportunities to help you mature.

This ancient meditation from the *Bhāgavatam* is not just a method for staying strong and positive; that is, it’s not a mental strategy for positive thinking. This meditation has the power to awaken you to the reality of who you are: an eternal spiritual soul. It is not an aid to imagining a power you don’t actually have.

Imagine if you had been acting more from the soul’s perspective throughout your life – where you would be in your relationships and realizations. Think of the joyous and bright perspective this meditation helps you realize – that you are a soul and everything is actually all right. You still have all opportunity to bring your life to this excellent level.



SUFFERING BECOMES PURIFICATION

If you connect with your undisturbed essence you will become free from suffering. Kṛṣṇa says,

Engaged constantly in chanting and hearing about Me, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the sādhus do not suffer from material miseries because they are always filled with thoughts of My pastimes and activities.

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 3.25.23)

Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes, “Although struck by torrents of water the mountain does not shake but rather becomes beautiful being washed of dirt. Similarly, a devotee who is afflicted by the pains caused by his body, mind, or other beings is not disturbed because his mind is absorbed in the Supreme Lord.”

(Sārātha Darśini, 10.20.15)

From the “mountain position” you can actually experience how your material existence serves your spiritual upliftment. Thus for devotees there are no more miseries or external disturbances – only lessons to help them on their way to Kṛṣṇa.

SIDEBAR: THE EMOTIONAL TRAFFIC LIGHT

The Emotional Traffic Light can help you maintain your spiritual position on a daily basis. This doesn’t mean ignoring or suppressing emotion but dealing with it in a proper way.

This is how it works:

If something happens that disturbs you, switch on red and pause for a moment – don’t give in to your automatic response. Then switch to yellow, remind yourself of who you are: the eternal soul! Ask yourself how you can respond so that everyone involved benefits. Then switch to green and act. Apply your realizations.