



KṚṢṆA SAMĀDHI



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OUR PROCESS OF ATTAINING FULL REALIZATION

How do we come to a stage of absorption in Kṛṣṇa? The step-by-step process our tradition offers to reach this goal consists of four steps, which we go through in this life, and a fifth step which can only be passed through in the next life (you need a spiritual body for it).

1. Śravaṇa-daśā

Śravaṇa-daśā is that stage when devotees hear from a qualified guru about *sādhana* and *sādhya*. They learn how to develop the qualifications to chant, then to chant without offense, and how to chant while yearning for the perfection of pure love of God.

2. Varaṇa-daśā

Varaṇa-daśā is the stage at which practitioners accept what they have heard about who they are and what they should do to reach perfection.

3. Smaraṇa-daśā

At this stage the devotees start to practice the path they have accepted. This stage is an attempt for realization where one seriously tries to achieve constant remembrance of the Lord.

4. Āpana-daśā

This is the stage at which the devotees have become fully absorbed in Kṛṣṇa and have attained Kṛṣṇa *samādhi* while still living in this world.

5. Prapanna-daśā

Prapanna-daśā is the stage at which the devotees become associates of Kṛṣṇa by the mercy of the holy name and attain their spiritual bodies.

What is it that brings us from the first to the last step? It is the mercy and power of the holy name. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura expresses it like this, “By chanting without offenses you will personally realize that all perfections come from the holy name.”

(Śrīla Prabhupādera *Patrāvati*, vol. 1, pp. 4–5)

Become aware of Krishna’s presence in your life

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes of Kṛṣṇa’s welcoming words to the devotee who has returned from the material world which are imbued with the greatest magnanimity: “[...] Continuously I have shown great regard for you. [...] For My sake, you have cut all chains of material attachment. I will never be able to repay the depths of the love you have shown. Be naturally satisfied in your service.”

(Śrī Caitanya *Śikṣāmṛta*, concluding words)

Kṛṣṇa expresses how he witnessed the struggle of the devotee to attain perfection, how he noticed every endeavour. It is very important to be aware of Kṛṣṇa’s support in our spiritual life. Do not think that you are alone! Kṛṣṇa is there, showering his love upon you. When you feel discouraged, open your heart to Kṛṣṇa, gaze at the smile of his deity form and meditate on the compassion this smile expresses.

THE MOUNTAIN MEDITATION

Śukadeva Gosvāmī gives a wonderful meditation in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.20.15) which can help us connect with the strength and stability of the soul.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura comments on that verse: Though struck by torrents of water, the mountain does not shake but rather becomes beautiful, being washed of dirt. Similarly, a devotee, afflicted by the pains caused by his body, mind or other entities, is not disturbed because his mind is absorbed in the Supreme Lord (*adhokṣaja citta*).

Practicing the mountain meditation will enable you to gain a new perspective in life where you will see the world in a new light:

1. Sit tall and focus on the sounds you presently hear. Focus on the objects you see. Just become aware of the present reality. This will help you to withdraw your thoughts from the busy day or from any other thoughts and emotions.
2. Now start to focus on your breathing. Become aware of your incoming and outgoing breath. Just observe the flow of your breathing for some time. This practice will calm your mind and prepare you for the next steps.



3. Bring your attention to the heart. Feel how you are surrounded by the different layers (mind and body). Notice how you are not touched by the thoughts and feelings which are “floating” around you.
4. Now evoke the picture of a mountain in your mind. Look at its beauty, its peaks, its valleys, and its vegetation. It is starting to rain, then it rains 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’s circumstances is hitting you, you remain peaceful just like a mountain remains stable in any weather. A mountain is unaffected by passing clouds, likewise you are not affected by passing emotions and thoughts.
5. Just as a mountain is deeply rooted at its base and stays fixed and immovable, so see how you are rooted in your relationship with Krishna. Krishna is your Lord, you are his part and parcel. You are his devotee and his eternal servant. You are sheltered in this way.
6. Stay in this awareness for a while. Observe what it feels like, and try to engrave the experience on your mind.

SIDEBAR: Seeing nature as our guru

To develop our consciousness of Kṛṣṇa, it is very helpful to accept nature as one of our gurus who teaches us about Kṛṣṇa. In our retreat, we dedicated one whole session to the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 11th Canto, Chapter 7. There we learnt from the *avadhūta brāhmaṇa* about 24 gurus, who can confer transcendental understanding upon us.